intersections

Women's and Gender Studies
in Review Across Disciplines

Gender and Social Justice

The University of Texas at Austin
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Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines is a graduate student publication committed to promoting the interdisciplinary research of women and gender. Published by graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin, *Intersections* seeks to create a feminist-centered space in which members of all academic disciplines can explore the depth and breadth of the study of women and gender. *Intersections* is building a community of voices across disciplines by: (1) Creating a space in which graduate students can participate in the process of academic publication; (2) Encouraging an environment in which academics and advocates can explore the intersections of their work, drawing connections between and among the multiple communities associated with women s and gender studies; (3) Facilitating a conversation of powerful voices joined in dialogue about women s and gender studies.

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Intersections 2010-2011 Editorial Board

Editorial Director's Letter

Welcome to the ninth issue of *Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines*. As we make strides towards our tenth issue, *Intersections* has begun the process of becoming an entirely digital journal. This year s issue will be released online through the University of Texas s Digital Library Repository and will be the final issue to also be available in print version. The Intersections Editorial Board has made this decision because we believe that this will help in both the circulation and accessibility of our current and future issues.

In the fall of 2010, the 2010-2011 *Intersections* Editorial Board met for the first time in a tiny multi-purpose office/conference room. The space was generously lent to us for the hour by the Center for Women and Gender Studies. During our introductory conversation, the journal staff all agreed upon the importance of theorizing gender and sexuality into topics of social, political, and economic justice. In deciding upon the theme of Gender and Social Justice, it was our aim to allow for numerous feminist interpretations of social justice, while at the same time finding pieces that incorporated an understanding of interlocking identities of race, sexuality, economic class, nationality, and indigeneity.

As we have worked on the journal together over the past year, the relevance of this issue s theme to the changing conditions of the university and the world at large has not been lost on us. In this time, we have seen the effects that political contestations over balanced budgets during an economic recession have had on the operation of Women and Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies centers and departments across the United States. At the University of Texas, we have watched these centers make difficult decisions based on forced budget cuts. Many of the Editorial Board members are affiliated with these centers and have been directly impacted by the budget cuts, and many of us have engaged in University-wide efforts to push back against the conditions created by these budget cuts. We have observed center directors and staff demand recognition from the University of Texas and the State Legislature of the importance that these interdisciplinary spaces serve in the advancement of critical and innovative humanities and social science scholarship.

Those whose scholarship looks at gender, sexuality, race, class, nationality, indigeneity, and disability are likely to understand from first hand experience the ways in which these centers and departments allow for our work to sit at the intersections of social justice and academic advancement. The presence of these centers and departments on university and college campuses were borne out of social movement struggles and, broadly speaking, have maintained their ties to local, national, and global social justice efforts.

Alongside what we have witnessed happening within colleges and universities over the past year, there has been an emergence of a number of social justice movements across the world. These have included the student protests in Puerto Rico, the Arab spring uprisings, anti-austerity movements throughout Europe, and now the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the U.S. In all of these movements, we see an emphasis on naming collective oppressions and making broader claims for human rights. As we continue to experience the tightening of university budgets and to witness the spread of global social movements, we find the theme of Gender and Social Justice of even greater importance than we could have imagined when we set forth working on this issue.

The Editorial Staff have been excited about the wide-array of submissions received and believe that our effort to incorporate multiple interpretations and imaginings for the theme of social justice has been a success. We contend that bringing issues of subjectivity into conversation with social justice efforts remains an important area of inquiry in the interdisciplinary field of gender and sexuality studies. We hope that some of the topics addressed in this issue inspire future work that continue to draw connections between interlocking identities and subject positionality within social institutions and social movements.

Table of Contents

Introduction
Lisa L. Moore **9**

Poetry
Lynching, 1896, Jefferson, LA
(Crime: Miscegenation: Living w/ white "husband")
Chanel Clarke **11**

Articles

Graduate Student Mothers of Color: The Intersectionality between Graduate Student, Motherhood and Women of Color in Higher Education
Reyna Anaya **13**

Female in the Military: A Case Study of Invisibility and Betrayal
Luana Bessa and Annie Farmer **32**

Containment and Resistance: Girls' writing in the juvenile justice system
Katherine Charek Briggs **48**

Troubled Discourses Among University Students: A Student-Driven Gender Project in Turkey
Antonia Mandry **67**

Picturing 'Naked Life': Bodies at the Margins in the Photography of Parminder Sekhon
Lauran E. Whitworth **91**

Poetry
Africa Stone: Challenge in the World's Strongest Man Competition
Chanel Clarke **123**

Book Reviews

Gender Circuits: Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age
by Eve Shapiro
Reviewed by Catherine Coleman **124**

Gender and Decolonization in the Congo: The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba
by Karen Bouwer
Reviewed by Tosin Abiodun **127**

Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth about Guilty Pleasure TV
by Jennifer L. Pozner
Reviewed by Virgina Hernandez **131**

Poetry
For Phyllis
Chanel Clarke **135**

Contributors **136**

Call for Papers **140**

Introduction to Gender and Social Justice

Lisa L. Moore
The University of Texas at Austin

hands tied
behind her back
-Chanel Clarke, “Lynching, 1896, Jefferson County LA”

Where do we experience oppression? In the military, in jail, in artistic representations, on our university campus, with our children. Where do we work for social justice? In the military, in jail, in artistic representations, on our university campus, with our children.

The articles, reviews and poems collected in this issue of *Intersections* testify to the intertwined nature of oppression and resistance in the lives of girls and women. When I teach women s literary history, students often tell me that it is no use to look for feminism in the fourteenth century, or the Renaissance, or the Victorian period, or Africa, or the Muslim world, because women back then or over there are silenced, oppressed, and powerless. This recognition, many believe, is a feminist one. But what I know from reading deeply in the history of women s writing is that wherever you find the oppression of women, you find women resisting oppression.

Jesus told fourteenth-century mystic Margery Kempe that, after fourteen children, she could no longer have sex with her husband because she was now His bride instead. So Kempe achieved a measure of reproductive freedom. Aemilia Lanyer took on the centuries-old accusation that women were inherently more sinful than men because Eve caused humanity to be kicked out of the garden. In exquisite stanzas of Renaissance ottava rima, she argued that Adam was the one who had directly received God s commands not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, so it was his job not to taste the fruit Eve offered. Eve, for her part, had a duty to learn as much as she could, deprived as she was of direct conversation with God. So Lanyer asserted women s spiritual and intellectual value. Phillis Wheatley, kidnapped and enslaved in eighteenth-century Boston, lectured owning-class Harvard

College divinity students about their religious failings, displaying in measured neoclassical verse her own mastery of Enlightenment theological and scientific debate. So Wheatley enacted not only her own humanity, but her capacity and her intellectual achievements against all odds.

In this issue, we learn from Luana Bessa and Annie Farmer that combat trauma for women veterans often takes the form, not just of assault by the enemy, but of betrayal by intimate others. Katherine Charek Briggs takes us inside inside the lives and imaginations of girls in juvenile detention who resist narratives of their own victimization through writing. Lauran Whitworth introduces us to the work of Black British queer photographer Parminder Sekhon, who remakes space in her images in order to make room for herself and her world. We travel to the Turkish campus of Sabanci University with Antonia Mandry and learn how women students and their allies use the tools of human rights discourse to transform oppressive gender norms in their culture. And Reyna Anaya documents the triple burden on women of color graduate students in an educational and professional environment that assumes everyone lives like a white man with no domestic or childcare responsibilities. The work of each of these young scholars not only bears witness to oppression and resistance, it is its own form of activism. Using the most sophisticated tools of theory and research, the writers in this issue remind us of a core tenet of feminism:

In order to object to your own dehumanization, you just have to be human. And we already are.

Lynching, 1896, Jefferson, LA (Crime: Miscegenation: Living w/ white “husband”)

Chanel Clarke
Michener Center for Writers, The University of Texas at Austin

hands tied
behind her back

hands that worked once
held the earned coin

hands that waved hello
hemmed skirts

hands that scraped
mud from stockings

hands that rested
on a child s stomach

lit the fire
gave a man his plate

hands with fingers
thin and brown

neck that knew
strain, that held

a head up high:
pieces sent away now

full lips cut off
tip of the nose cut off

thumbs cut off
nipples cut off

given to the crowd
taped to postcards

placed in plastic bags
and mailed to cousins

Graduate Student Mothers of Color: The Intersectionality between Graduate Student, Motherhood and Women of Color[1] in Higher Education

Reyna Anaya
University of Northern Colorado

[1] I capitalize the terms Women of Color, Person of Color, People of Color, Faculty of Color and so forth because the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition Manual requires capitalization of proper nouns when referencing race/ethnic groups (i.e. White). By capitalizing terms similar to those above, I illustrate the notion for equality between dominant and underrepresented populations.

> If academics are suppose to work around the clock, mothers are suppose to do it with a perpetual smile on their face and a stylish pair of shoes. (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009, p. 439).

Social change in gender roles has contributed to the emergence of women in higher education. The percentage of female students returning and/or seeking out graduate education programs has increased significantly since the 1970s (Kuperberg, 2009). In 2000, women comprised 45% of all doctoral recipients in the United States, in comparison to 10% in 1970 (Kuperberg, 2009). Despite the climb in enrollment and graduate rates, women s experiences are not equal to those of men. A woman s path to higher education is still more likely to be interrupted by family life than a man (Lynch, 2008). Attrition rates of graduate student mothers, as a result, are affected by child rearing responsibilities (Lynch, 2008). Also, access and support are not the same for all women. Women of Color experiences (i.e. graduate student Mothers of Color) are stifled on university and college campuses by the dominant, White culture s socially constructed ideals of gender roles and ethnic/race assumptions (Souto-Manning & Ray, 2010). Within this paper, I explore graduate student Mother of Color (GSMOC) experiences and its connection to the theoretical understanding of intersectionality theory. In addition, the experiences of motherhood, graduate students, and women of color in higher education, are highlighted as means to elucidate the gap in knowledge about GSMOC as a growing population in higher education.

Intersectionality Theory: Creating Visibility for Multiple Identities

Intersectionality theory examines the intertwining of multiple social and cultural identities (i.e. ethnicity/race, gender) (Crenshaw, 1989). Interpreted as one line crossing the other or one identity crossing another, intersectionality was originally introduced by Black feminists in the late 1980s as means to explain how People of Color cross gender lines (Knudsen, 2005). Crenshaw (2003) reflected on the impact of intersectionality for Women of Color through the use of a “traffic light metaphor”: the traffic light represents an over-

lap of two or more avenues (i.e. social identities), which generates a complex intersection to negotiate traffic (i.e. society). Collins (1990) stated it is unjust for a Woman of Color to choose between her identity as a woman and as a Black person in personal and political situations. Examples such as the phrasing of “women and minorities” (Linder & Rodriguez, 2010, p. 6) and the librarian s dilemma, the divided decision to place a Black women s history book in a Black or women s history section (Purdie-Vaughns & Eiback, 2008, p. 383), advance the invisibility of Women of Color. Understanding intersectionality, therefore, validates and creates visibility of individual, Women of Color experiences beyond the mainstream culture.

Theoretically, scholars have divided the term intersectionality into short and long definitions. Intersectionality theory, in the short form, is grounded in the notion of fluid identities with focus on the relationships between personal and social identities and their interaction(s) with one another in social constructions of power (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). Dill and Zambrana (2009) advanced the concept of intersectionality through four theoretical interventions:

> • Placing the lived experiences and struggles of people of color and other marginalized groups as a starting point for the development of theory;
> • Exploring the complexities not only of individual identities but also group identity, recognizing that variations within groups are often ignored and essentialized;
> • Unveiling the ways interconnected domains of power organize and structure inequality and oppression; and
> • Promoting social justice and social change by linking research and practice to create a holistic approach to the eradication of disparities and to changing social and higher education institutions. (5)

Referenced within critical theory, intersectionality creates a paradigmatic shift in theory which includes activism and the deconstruction of power systems.

Literature suggests two types of intersectionality, additive and transversal. Berger and Guidroz (2010) suggested

that additive intersectionality remains on one level of analysis and perpetuates the incorporation of diversity among people (i.e. Women of Color) by creating inter-action or separation. The addition of categories (e.g. motherhood and student) from a transversal or wider lens of intersectionality eliminates the *competing intersectionality* (Lykke, 2005) and intertwines, pervades, and transforms each identity (Knudsen, 2005). The complexity of intersectionality, therefore, takes on an *intra-active* or integrated (Lykke, 2005) versus separated characteristic when defining social identities and their influence on a person's environments and interactions with others (Collins, 1990). The integration of intersectionality theory from a transversal lens appropriately highlights the multiple social identities for GSMOC.

Motherhood: Defining the *Good* Mother

Motherhood marks a significant shift in the emotional and familial lives of women and their place in society (Heisler & Ellis, 2008). Williams (2009) implied the celebration of motherhood is tightly coupled with guilt and criticism and cannot be isolated from the social construction of good and bad parenting. *Good* mothering, from the privileged perspective of White , married women, exists in two forms: traditional mother and supermom (Hays, 1996). The traditional mother is a stay at home mom who cheerfully studies the latest issue of *Family Circle*, places flowers in every room, and has dinner on the table when her husband gets home (Hays, 1996, p. 131-132). In contrast, the supermom can push a stroller with one hand and carry a briefcase with the other to maintain family/ work balance (Hays, 1996, p. 132).

Despite the ambivalence between mother categories, Collins (1991) and Joseph (1991) argue White feminist theoretical perspectives about mothering eliminate race and cultural considerations and therefore do not apply to the lives of Black mothers or other Women of Color. Scholars who attempted to re-discover mother of color experiences, however, focused on deficit thinking and/ or criticized mother of color mothering practices (Conway-Jones, 2006). For example, the notion of welfare mothers is often placed in the context of Women of Color versus a social class paradigm. Other demographics such as sexual orientation, nationality, age, social class, and ability are also topics which need to be

included in the mother debate. Demographics aside, a *good* mother must be an intensive one.

The idea of intensive mothering is an exclusive, child-centered, emotional, and time-consuming role (Hays, 1996; Douglas & Michaels (2004). An intensive mother holds herself accountable for providing a seamless progression from conception to birth to child years and beyond (Bell, 2004). Centered on the devotion of care and self-sacrifice (Arendell, 2000), intensive mothering serves the interest of men, capitalism, the state, the middle class, and whites (Bell, 2004, p. 48). Further, male domination and socialized gender roles romanticize motherhood, thus perpetuating the power and inequity in mothering (Bell, 2004). Race inequity divides mothering experiences and removes Women of Color voices from mommy literature, which sends the message: "Affluent white women are the only mothers who really matter (Philyaw, 2008, p. 3). Multiple, shifting, intersections of power relations, between men and women, between dominant and subordinate racial groups, between colonizer and colonized" standardize all mothering practices and politicize the struggle of mothers (Glenn, 1994, p. 17). Collins (1994) uses the term *motherwork*, instead of motherhood as means to eradicate societal expectations on women and situate motherhood as work rather than a mindless and unproductive role (Hays, 1996, p. 136). This terminology eliminates the dichotomization of gendered perspectives on mothering (Collins, 2004); however, the dissonance experienced by mothers and their choice to stay home or return to work still remains a battle for many women.

The ambivalence between each *good* mothering role has resulted in the mommy war phenomenon (Darnton, 1990). The question of Who is the better mommy? creates a no-win situation for women in their child-bearing years and places women from different social categories (i.e. ethnicity/race, class, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc.) against each other (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996). The mommy wars is a convenient way to redirect conversation away from real issues facing today's mothers such as "affordable health care, quality day care, gender and racial equity, fathers roles in parenting, media effects, fair wages and benefits, and family-friendly work arrangements (Zimmerman, Aberle, Krafchick, & Harvey, 2008, p. 204). Although, many women see the *mommy wars* as an exaggerated and superfi-

cial media war (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996), mothers continue to seek balance in their lives as means to contribute to their family well-being (Zimmerman et al, 2008).

Perceived as the only *choice* in *good* mothering, paid work benefits mothers at a cognitive, emotional, and social level (Hays, 1996). Hays (1996) study indicated one-third of all stay-at-home moms planned to work as soon as they found paid employment, while others committed to staying home throughout their children s formative years. Financial need, however, is not the only reason guiding women s decision to return to work (Crittenden, 2001). The majority of women want to work outside the home to maintain their identity and sense of self rather than for monetary gain (Minisky, 2006). Lack of recognition, balance, motivation, and intellectual stimulation are reasons stay-at-home moms seek paid employment and adult experiences.

> I loved being in the company of adults. I loved being able to swear freely and not worry that I might be corrupting anyone It had been so long since I had gossiped about anything besides other people s nannies. I made new friends.
> (Minisky, 2006, p. 16)

The force also driving privileged mothers initiatives to re-enter the workforce is the lack of value placed on mothering (Crittenden, 2001). Societal descriptors such as lazy, mindless, TV watching housewives create uncomfortable feelings for stay-at-home moms in social situations. Questions such as What do you do? and Do you have a job? dominate stay-at-home mothers thoughts in interactions with adults, particularly other women. Although, negative perceptions on mothering influence many mothers' *choice* to work or stay home, it is important to highlight there are mothers who *remain secure* with their positions as stay-at-home moms (Minisky, 2006), mothers who *lack the resources* to obtain employment outside of the home (Clifford, 2006), and mothers who *do not have the choice* to remain at home during child rearing years (Cheever, 2006).

For mothers who return to work, a *second shift* in identity emerges for paid working moms as they attempt to balance mother and working woman identities (Lynch, 2008). Gendered philosophies of care/guidance

and responsibility (i.e. child rearing, cooking, cleaning) coupled with feelings of guilt challenge working moms ability to identify with the supermom identity (Hays, 1996). Mother s guilt, however, deepens as society tells working women they are bad mothers for placing their own interests before those of their children (Gilbert, 2008).

> So why do I feel so guilty? Because our culture tells me I should. Having been well socialized to take care of others, being rewarded for putting their needs first (and punished for failure to do so), I am constantly refilling my cultural guilt prescription (Gilbert, 2008, p. 208).

Working Mothers of Color, particularly Black mothers, want to yawn at the angst about shouldering multiple burdens and juggling multiple roles many White mothers complain about in memoirs (Philyaw, 2008, p. 3). Historically, Black women outnumbered White women in the workforce since the 1940s due to economic reasons; thus they do not associate guilt with the duality of working mom because it is what they have always done (Philyaw, 2008). Therefore, if a Black mother can have a choice to stay home with her children or opt to pursue a career full-time, society has reached a historical moment (Philyaw, 2008).

Graduate Student Mother: Balancing the *Good* Mother & *Good* Student Identities

The socially-constructed definitions of *good* student and *good* mother stratifies the identity intersectionality of graduate student mothers (GSM) in today s higher education system (Lynch, 2008). Unable to separate the two identities (i.e. mother and student), some GSM default to maternal invisibility (Lynch, 2008) in order to convince their peers (Jiron-King, 2005) and advisors (Bolick, 2010) they are serious and committed scholars. Maternal invisibility, non-disclosure of motherhood identity, allows GSM to appear as committed students (Lynch, 2008), and remove maternal bias from interfering with their academic careers (Jiron-King, 2005). Excluded from the literature on maternal invisibility are demographic characteristics (i.e. ethnicity/race, age, marital status, socio-economic status, etc.) which differentiate the

motherhood and student experience. Jiron-King (2005) specifically talked about the intersectionality of ethnic identity in GSM and the dissonance it creates for traditionally marginalized women (i.e. Chicana women, women of Mexican decent born in the United States), and their perception of maternal invisibility. Defined in previous generations as uneducated and housebound, Chicana women fought to eliminate traditional ethnic attitudes associated with gendered roles such as housewife and mother as means to shift stereotypical thinking. The Chicana mother, as a result; changed, however issues of privilege continue to affect her choice to disclose her GSM identity (Jiron-King, 2005).

Age and partnership (i.e. marital) status also influence the support of a GSM. In particular, the capital associated with maturity and its impact on child rearing practices and the balancing of multiple life priorities can create dissonance for a GSM (Larson, 2004). The cognitive, emotional, and psychological shift which occurs during motherhood coupled with the lack of resources available on child rearing can influence negative parent-child interactions for young mothers (Larson, 2004). Unlike the amount of literature on high risk outcomes for young mothers, the experiences of mothers, age 40 and older, is an emergent topic in scholarly research. In addition, GSMs who identify as being in a partnership (i.e. marriage) differ on the level of support offered and/or received in their relationships. While children are not the sole responsibility of mothers, women continued to be seen as the primary caregivers in the relationship (Stimpson & Filer, 2011). Single, GSMs experiences and its bearing on supportive systems in higher education, however, have not been well researched in the graduate student literature.

Another area not often discussed in graduate student literature is the role of work-life balance and its influence on the support GSMs receive in their respective academic disciplines. Assistantships, academic workload, research, internships, and/or part-time employment are examples of the breath of work graduate students do on a daily basis (Stimpson & Filer, 2011, p. 70). Coupled together with other life commitments (i.e. family, friends, organizations, religion, hobbies) graduate students work ranges in its complexity. Therefore, the multiplicity experienced by graduate students perpetuates

the level of support received in graduate education (Stimpson & Filer, 2011). In particular, graduate assistants (GA) highlight unreasonable work, stereotypical roles, poor work environments, assignment of supervisors, and tasks assigned as concerns toward an unsupportive culture (Brown-Wright, Dubick, & Newman, 1997, p. 410). These conditions add to the complexity of intersectionality and the socially constructed implications confronting a GSM who also identifies as a GA. The priority disagreement a GSM faces as she navigates from one role to another (e.g. graduate student to mother to GA) is where imbalance and guilt set in as social indicators of *bad* mother, *bad* student, and *bad* GA.

Creating Supportive Structures for GSMs

Good student and motherhood characteristics create dissonance in higher education GSM support systems, classifying GSM as an underserved population with high attrition rates (Lynch, 2008). GSMs, as a result, are faced with several challenges within their individual departments and the university community. Financial aid and child care are among the top two structural areas in higher education which raise concern for GSMs (Lynch, 2008). Institution-based funding such as teaching and graduate assistantships are insufficient to cover immediate needs of GSMs (i.e. health care and child care costs) (Lynch, 2008). Other financial items include the switch to part-time status, the length of loan deference, and the availability of supportive partner resources (Lynch, 2008). Finding affordable and reliable child care can be a huge burden for a GSM. Although some universities and colleges offer on-site child care, vacancies are limited and tuition costs are often high for a GSM budget. Operating hours of child care facilities is another important factor affecting GSMs thus forcing GSMs to look for secondary sources of child care to work on school responsibilities.

Themes emerged throughout the literature related to GSM identity support in academic departments: few institutions are tailored to meet the needs of this population, there is little knowledge amongst faculty on how to support GSMs, and GSM accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis (Springer et al, 2009). Areas of family-friendly space (i.e. breast feeding/pumping stations, family bathrooms, and changing tables), childcare subsidies, or faculty training on

GSM campus support services were offered by less than 15% of the departments in Springer et al s (2009) study on a Sociology departments support systems for graduate student parents. Professional development opportunities were listed at 17.5 % and family-friendly functions were unheard of by GSM (Springer et al, 2009). GSM, as a result, were intellectually supported by their faculty, but unsupported emotionally (Lynch, 2008) in their multiple identities. The physical environment of a university or college campus and its lack of changing tables or nursing stations sends a message to GSMs their children and families do not belong on a campus (Springer et al, 2009).

Although, GSMs are not receiving the adequate support they need from their university and college communities or academic departments, peers and spouse/partners are helping to fill the gap. GSMs who know other students combining graduate student and motherhood reported having a greater satisfaction in peer relationships (Lynch, 2008). However, when GSMs are the only women in their cohort or department with children and they have no contact with other GSMs, even after they disclosed their motherhood identity, satisfaction drops significantly. The support of spouses, family, and friends, as a result, is utilized to overcome the feelings of stress and solation (Lynch, 2008). A spouse/partner is often the main source of support for a GSM, which, if available, helps to lower attrition rates (Lynch, 2008). The importance of validation from peers, colleagues, and a spouse/partner for GSM is also reflected in the experiences of Women of Color in higher education. In particular, for GSMOC who plan to pursue a career in higher education as a faculty or staff member, it is important to explore the experiences of Women of Color and create awareness on how they continue to be marginalized in higher education.

Women of Color in Higher Education: Overused, Misunderstood, and Unappreciated

I am marked by the color of my skin. (Cervantes, 1990, 5)

Women of Color in higher education face challenges relative to promotion, pay, committee work, membership on policy-making bodies, and appointment to administrative posts (Anderson & Dede, 2004, p. 51). In Moses (1989) study, Black women stated they needed to work hard,

remain quiet, and show appreciation for their jobs in higher education. Black women also expressed experiences of exploitation and overuse through role modeling theory, a phenomenon which labels specific individuals as *go-to* people (Conway-Jones, 2006). Students view women of color as compassionate caregivers, counselors, and symbols and thus receive requests from all students, not just Students of Color and women (Conway-Jones, 2006, p. 125). In this role, Women of Color, particularly women Faculty of Color, suffer in resources and time available for scholarship production toward tenure (Conway-Jones, 2006). The tenure process developed by and for non-minority men do not share the same interests, needs, views or experiences of Faculty of Color, primarily Women of Color (Gregory, 2004, p. 149). Faculty of Color, as a result, are expected to perform extra requests in addition to tenure requirements of teaching, research, and service (Green & McCloud, 2004). In the future, it is important the academy seek better ways to recognize the value of service and teaching that are disproportionately conducted by women faculty (Ropers-Huilman, 2008).

Women more frequently occupy administrative positions marginal to the institutional mission (i.e. counseling, positions for women, and positions for other underrepresented groups), despite their educational background (Warring, 2004). In addition, women administrators reported more barriers to upward mobility in higher education than men (e.g. sex discrimination, family responsibilities, and their education). Women of Color, however, face the *two-for* rule when hired in higher education settings (Anderson & D d , 2004). Identifying as a woman and Person of Color, Women of Color not only benefit university statistics, but they also bring unique administration perspectives to campus (i.e. marginalized identity experiences, ideas for inclusionary practice). Yet, literature on the race and gender interaction for Women of Color is limited and assumed to reflect in the experiences of Men of Color and White women (Waring, 2004).

The lack of support and unwelcoming environments contribute to the barriers (i.e. poor retention rates, lack of funding and mentoring for research, inadequate preparation for teaching, and lack of job security) experienced by Women of Color, particularly Black women faculty, in higher education (Anderson & D d , 2004). Women of Color administrators, as a result, must perform at higher

expectations than their White counterparts to avoid the above barriers. From a scholar perspective, Women of Color need great articulation skills, better qualifications, and an aggressive, but feminine leadership style (Willis & Lewis, 1999). Anderson and D d (2004) suggested universities hire Women of Color in areas other than those traditionally identified as minority programs and/or positions to reduce bias and to educate about diversity.

Intersections: The Identity of Graduate Student Mothers of Color

Graduate student mothers of color (GSMOC) have emerged as a visible population within higher education. Literature on motherhood, GSMs, and Women of Color experiences in higher education, however, must merge to reflect ways in which privilege and oppression influence cognitive, emotional, and physical spaces on campus for GSMOC. Intersectionality theory, in comparison, has enhanced scholarship and elucidated the importance of multiple social identities and their impact on GSMOC. University personnel and faculty s understanding of identity intersectionality theory (Collins, 1990) is pertinent to the success and integration of current and future GSMOC. Questions such as: How do institutions accommodate for women s multiple identities? Can social institutions and the people who dominate them change to incorporate GSMOC experiences? (Ropers-Huilman, 2008) must guide future decision making on university and college campuses.

Recommendations for inclusive practices on campus should focus on eliminating GSM marginalization in academia and the university/college community. Structural additions such as on-site day care, breast feeding/pumping and changing stations, and family bathrooms near all student centered/support areas will enhance the functionality of campus for GSMs. University faculty/staff perceptions focused on GSMs academic potential and success versus cultural assumptions (e.g. lack of physical ability, difficulty balancing home and school/work) about expecting GSMs and current GSMs will minimize the anxiety associated with *belonging* in the academy for GSMs. However, to retain GSMOC it is integral to couple culturally competent support with Women of Color experiences (Milner, 2004) to highlight appropriately the experiences of GSMOC (Collins, 1991). Advisor/mentor

relationships with women Faculty/Staff/Students of Color, particularly other GSMOC if available, allow GSMOC to monitor their academic progress, develop relationships with individuals who look like them and share similar experiences, and advance persistence and resiliency amongst GSMOC (Milner, 2004). Increasing the hiring pipeline for more faculty/staff of color, therefore, is necessary to accommodate for mentor programs and services.

GSMOC are also responsible for the quality of their graduate experience. Operating under a prescribed set of scholarly rules, GSMOC can choose to maintain their voice and stories through research and active participation in their institutional communities (Webb, 2006). Strategies for Women of Color to participate and address the differential treatment of women Scholars of Color in their institutions are: speak to issues related to the discrimination of *all* scholars, encourage supportive networks with like-minded colleagues [and/or students, faculty, practitioners], name traditions of exclusion in academia [higher education], *dialogue* with students and community about practices of discrimination and the treatment of faculty[and/or practitioners] at their university, *identify and understand* sources of power within the institution, choose battles wisely, *do not accept* the disempowerment that says, for example, You do not belong here, and remember to *laugh* (Balderrama, Texeria, Valdez, 2006, p. 228). GSMOC can couple such strategies with their own experiences to increase the betterment of the institutional community as well as their own academic careers.

Conclusion

The drive toward inclusion and equity in each of their social identities has developed meaning for the GSMOC population in a gendered and racist societal system. Although, literature on Women of Color does not expand beyond a critical lens, Mothers of Color are initiating dialogue amongst their own mommy memoirs (Philyaw, 2008) and institutional communities to create change (Balderrama et al, 2006). With awareness and value placed on multiple social identities and their intersectionality, GSMOC will continue to build in power and spirit in higher education, society, and their individual lives.

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Female in the Military: A Case Study of Invisibility and Betrayal

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To hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance.

- Judith Herman

Trauma in Societal Discourse

The study of trauma and its psychological consequences has a long and complicated history. The increasing role of women in the military invites us as mental health professionals to critically examine this history. Renowned psychiatrist Judith Herman (1997), in her essential work *Trauma and Recovery*, traces our understanding of trauma from hysteria, to shell shock and combat stress of male veterans, and finally to domestic and sexual violence against women. She stresses that each particular form of trauma has surfaced into public consciousness (p. 9) as a function of social and political context. Hysteria, for example, was a paternalistic classification borne of a social context that devalued women s experiences and failed to acknowledge male abuses of power. Not until male combat trauma had been acknowledged and largely de-stigmatized through consciousness raising efforts and a growing awareness of the medical community after WWII and the Vietnam War did female experiences of sexual trauma, largely in the context of the Women s Movement, come to be seen as legitimate and worthy of public attention. Herman highlights the importance of social and political context in affirming and protecting trauma victims, as well as the tendency for society, like individuals, to go through periods of dissociation, repression, remembrance, and mourning. These periods each result in vastly different responses to trauma survivors. For example, whereas denial silences and isolates them, remembrance may open up the discourse and promote healing.

Jonathan Shay (1994), a clinical psychiatrist and author with decades of involvement with Vietnam veterans at the Veterans Association, views the loss of trust as a crucial factor in the development of trauma symptoms, and its restoration as a crucial aspect of healing. In this sense, his analysis is very much in harmony with Herman s. He delicately traces the male veteran psychological experience, using war metaphors and the universality of human experiences as

his tools. He, like Herman, challenges mental health professionals and society as a whole to not turn away from pain but toward it, to recognize community and relationship as the key to healing. However, neither Shay nor Herman address female veterans and the ways in which their distinct experiences may shape and expand our understanding of trauma across gendered lines.

Our aim in this paper is to explore themes present in the female veteran experience and, in doing so, promote a social and political climate in which the voices of this growing class of trauma victims can be heard. Currently, the psychological literature of the female veteran experience is quite limited. We aim to contribute to this literature through the case study of a particular female Marine. The story of Tara, a young woman whose experience of military service resulted in her feeling betrayed on multiple levels, illustrates the ways in which the female veteran experience is distinct, nuanced, and worthy of further attention. Her story is not meant to generalize about the female veteran population as a whole. It is meant to problematize our understanding of the veteran experience and challenge us to promote healing by reminding us to pay close attention to the ways in which such factors as identity, political and social context, and life experiences intersect.

Currently, the steady increase of women s participation in the military presents a new area of focus for mental health professionals, as well as a new societal challenge as female veterans return from war with trauma experiences that may be qualitatively distinct from those of their male counterparts. These women s experiences complicate traditional understandings of both combat and military trauma, as well as traditional understandings of sexual and domestic violence. Herman states, Returning veterans may be frustrated with their families naive and unrealistic views of combat, but at least they enjoy the recognition that they have been to war. Rape victims, by and large, do not (1997, p. 67). However, female veterans in the current social and political climate of the United States often face the double betrayal of having their experiences as combat veterans, as well as their experiences of sexual harassment and assault within the military, dismissed and unacknowledged.

A recent documentary, titled *Lioness* (McGlagan & Sommers, 1998), speaks to the issue of invisibility of female

service officers. It traces the lives of several members of the Lioness team, a team of women who participated in special missions in Iraq, who remain absent from most retellings of history in spite of their important contributions. There is a particularly poignant moment in the documentary when these female veterans watch a History Channel special that narrates the operations in which they were involved, but completely excludes the Lioness special operations team from the narrative. The women glance at each other, visibly affected by the sense of betrayal that comes from returning to a civilian community that does not understand or acknowledge the service they have provided and the risks they have taken. These women have been on the front lines like their male peers, have experienced combat like their male peers, and struggle with trauma. The difference is that, according to the law, women are not allowed to be given combat missions and, therefore, their experiences are not acknowledged and validated. The reality, then, of the extent of women's participation in combat, is strikingly at odds with the current legal and political discourse, and the consequence is that female service members experience this discrepancy as a betrayal.

Military Service and Mental Health

Research with military personnel has demonstrated the serious impact that military service can have on mental health. In 2006, a large-scale study revealed that 19.1% of service members returning from Iraq reported a mental health problem, as did 11.3% of those returning from Afghanistan (Hoge, Auchterlonie, & Milliken, 2006). What we know about the nature of these problems has most often come from predominantly male samples, but the face of the military is changing rapidly. Approximately 14% of deployed troops are female and there are currently 1.7 million female veterans (Street, Vogt, & Dutra, 2009). Recent research has suggested that this group may differ in some important ways from their male counterparts. In a 2010 study comparing women and men serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, Fontana, Rosenheck, and Desai (2010) determined that there were significant differences between groups on 21 of the 30 variables considered. Such differences concerned pre-service characteristics (such as ethnicity, marital status, and job history), military experiences (such as rates of combat exposure and

military sexual trauma), and post-service mental health (rates of PTSD and other mental health disorders). Given these differences, engaging in research that is focused on the female military experience is crucial to better understanding and treating these women.

Study Background

The case study we examine here focuses on the female veteran experience in the current sociopolitical and military climate, and asks how it can inform us as clinicians in our work with sexual harassment and trauma survivors. The study grew out of a project begun in 2007 by University of Texas at Austin Professor Ricardo Ainslie and his research team. We sought veterans of military conflicts to share their personal narratives for compilation in a documentary titled *Coming Home*. The team interviewed participants about serving in a war zone and asked how these experiences changed them. In reviewing the interviews, we became interested in the story of one female veteran interviewee whose story was qualitatively different from those of her male peers, and who spoke to how her gender seemed to shape her experience. This interest led to a thematic analysis of this veteran s two one-hour interviews, which we will describe in the next section. We maintain her privacy throughout our analysis through the use of pseudonyms and the exclusion of identifying information.

Case Overview

Tara grew up in New York City. She was raised in the Islamic faith and attended college in Manhattan. While still a college student, she began to work as a New York City Police cadet. On September 11, 2001, she was scheduled to work, but called in for a replacement so that she could go to campus. She was deeply disturbed by the terrorist attacks that day, and by the anti-Muslim sentiment she heard many people expressing. After 9/11, she had a desire to serve the country that had given her so many opportunities and to prove that not everyone from an Islamic background was corrupt. She soon spoke with a military recruiter who highlighted how the military provided the chance to serve the country while gaining a sense of discipline, an idea that was very appealing to her. She also met several female officers

some of whom were enlisted, and was struck by their leadership skills. They encouraged her, telling her she could be an officer as well, and she imagined herself following the same path. She enlisted in the military in 2002, when she was 22 years old.

Upon arriving in Kuwait, Tara was told to throw everything she had learned in training out the window. After arriving in Kuwait, she moved all over Iraq in 2003 as part of an infantry team. Working with her in setting up communication radios was Sally, an 18 year-old young woman from the Midwest who Tara described as a dedicated worker. She confided in Tara that one of their sergeants had been sexually assaulting her and had threatened that speaking out would jeopardize her career. Sally swore Tara to secrecy, and Tara watched as Sally s behavior changed. Sally gradually became more distant and quiet. Tara finally attempted to subtly draw others attention to the sergeant s behavior towards her friend. When Sally realized what Tara was doing, she was angered, afraid that others would not believe her if her story surfaced, and that people would blame her. Their relationship became strained.

Around this time, the same sergeant approached Tara, initially sharing personal information about his family and then declaring that he thought he liked Tara as more than a friend. Tara was not interested and made that clear. Unfortunately, her refusal to comply with her sergeant s sexual wishes had repercussions. He assigned her additional work and spoke poorly of her to her superior officers. As Sally was receiving praise and recognition from the sergeant, he made Tara s life a living hell. Upon returning to the United States, the sergeant s behavior was swept under the rug." Only after several women in different units filed reports against him was the officer ever disciplined.

Thematic Analysis: Levels of Betrayal

- Betrayal by Institution

Tara experienced betrayal on a series of levels as a soldier and veteran; one of these levels was institutional Tara initially entered the Marines with high expectations and excitement. She was drawn to the Marine values and was proud to be among its ranks. She described her feelings at

the beginning of her deployment experience:

> When I went to Iraq, believe it or not you would think I'm crazy, but I was really excited. Not to be in combat, but I was really excited to be with my unit, to fight side by side with my unit, and to finally be a Marine and not just be a boot... I really just wanted to be one of the finest, the best, and to work with the best.

While Tara had expected her role to be one of honor and integrity, and her unit to sustain those same values that had been espoused to her in training, she came face to face with issues of hypocrisy and abuses of power. She also realized that she was seen as a tool rather than an individual. Tara stated:

> I just got this feeling after awhile that I was being lied to. You know, that I was just a number being used for someone else's gain or profit. We were disposable . [The superiors] would give a great speech to us and we would all be motivated and then their actions speak differently later on. That kind of made me question, you know, we re here for honor, courage, commitment and yet [the superiors] abuse us [and] lie to us.

In the course of her deployment, Tara found herself deceived and drained. She felt disillusioned with the actions of her higher-ups and found herself questioning a role about which she had at first been incredibly passionate.

Tara was also surprised by the extent of her involvement in her service. She described one of her thoughts as she rolled out in a line of humvee tanks:

> I was like, Wait a minute, I thought females don t go out. [Laughs] Even when I was ready to go out and fight, I was thinking that maybe I was going to be somewhere in the back supporting and stuff like that. No, I was out there in the vehicles and wherever my unit went, I went. Out there, male or female didn t matter; you are a soldier I was really proud of that...I felt proud that I was able to roll out with my unit.

On the one hand, Tara expresses pride at being given the opportunity to fully participate in the Marine experience of deployment. On the other hand, she states clearly that she did not realize, until actually rolling out with the unit, that she would be put in that much danger. Tara experienced betrayal by the military institution as a whole. Not only was she deceived about what the extent of her involvement with combat would be; she was also disappointed in her realization that the Marine ideals of honor and integrity were not followed on a day-to-day basis in the field.

Tara s experience of being surprised by the duties she was expected to perform are consistent with the experience of other female veterans. Members of the Lioness team related similar stories. Specifically, they reported that their preparation was inadequate to prepare them for missions they encountered, with one mission in particular going from routine and standard to life threatening. Because they had not had the same training as their male peers, members of the Lioness team were not as prepared to assure their own survival (McGlagan & Sommers, 1998). Female soldiers are put in a liminal position where the technical job description clashes drastically, and at times dangerously, with the actual lived experience of war. This shock between the expected mission and the actual mission is not foreign to male soldiers, but the gendered basis for this disconnect is an added element that marginalizes and delegitimizes the female experience.

- Betrayal by Superiors and Unit

Not only did Tara experience a betrayal in terms of feeling that she was lied to about her mission by the military structure, but she also experienced a more intimate and personal betrayal by those around her on whom she was supposed to depend for her very survival. In discussing her disillusionment with her military service experience, Tara focuses on one situation in particular: her superior officer's sexual misconduct towards her friend and herself. Her description of her officer's behavior fits the definition of military sexual trauma (MST): sexual assault or repeated, unsolicited, threatening acts of sexual harassment that occurs during military service (Rowe, Gradus, Pineles, Batten, & Davison, 2009, p. 388). Researchers have found that between 15% (Kimerling et al., 2010) and 24% of female veterans reported

experiencing MST (Fontana et al., 2010). This large number of women is particularly troubling given the evidence of the negative health sequelae of MST. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that female service members who experience MST are significantly more likely to report mental health conditions such as PTSD, other anxiety disorders, depression, and substance use disorders compared with those who do not (Himmelfarb et al., 2006). Himmelfarb, Yaeger, and Mintz (2006) have also demonstrated a stronger correlation between MST and the development of PTSD than between sexual assaults that happen outside of the military, pre- or post- service, and the development of PTSD.

Betrayal trauma theory is useful here for unraveling the potency of these kinds of acts of sexual harassment in a military context. A betrayal trauma is a trauma perpetrated by someone upon whom the individual depends for survival, such as a parent or partner. Several studies have linked high betrayal traumas with poorer outcomes for mental health (DePrince & Freyd, 2002). Researchers suggest that such types of trauma are particularly damaging because they create a conflict between the need to maintain a relationship and the need to respond to betrayal with protective action. Although this theory has traditionally been applied to child abuse in the family environment, it is also very relevant to the military environment, where one is extremely dependent not only on leaders, but also on fellow soldiers. Shay (1994) describes the dependency of the soldier on the military to be as complete as that of a small child on his or her family (p. 18).

Tara spoke of her initial attachment to her unit as an eagerness to fight “side by side.” Tara’s excitement to be a part of a unit that fought together mirrored the ideal of unit cohesion that is fundamental to military training. On the battlefield, survival depends on trust in the unit and this is a message she likely encountered repeatedly before her deployment. Following her experience of harassment by her superior, Tara has a much different description of being with her unit.

> It s overwhelming. It s kind of like being in the middle of the desert and, everywhere you look, when you turn around 360 degrees, there s nothing but desert. And even though you re with

> your unit, you still feel alone and you feel like you re not sure who you re getting shot by. Is it your unit or the people who are hiding somewhere in the bushes somewhere, who are planning to shoot you and take you out?

Tara s metaphor captures the isolation and fear that she felt. A natural response to harassment or abuse is to distance oneself from the perpetrator; however, the military context forced her and Sally to maintain a relationship with the individual who was responsible for the trauma. The reality of doing risky work attached to the artillery demanded they continue to work together because they were dependent on their fellow soldiers for their safety. Yet, because Tara believed that others in her unit were aware of her sergeant s behavior and did nothing to stop it, her trust in them eroded to the point that she lost all sense of safety.

Speaking of Sally s response to the MST she was enduring, Tara says, She just became numb. She became like Nothing s wrong. Nothing happened. I ve got my job to do, you know. Nobody s going to believe me. She became like a robot .Anyway, they questioned and then they just let it go. Tara observed the helplessness that Sally felt in the face of her repeated abuse and the gradual shutting down that can accompany trauma. Her observation that despite suspicions, the unit just let it go reinforced the idea that there was little recourse. Although Tara arrived in Iraq with high expectations of fighting in a cohesive unit, as a female soldier she did not reap the full benefits of camaraderie with her unit and fellow soldiers, particularly when it came time for them to acknowledge and respond appropriately to her experiences with her sexually inappropriate sergeant.

According to Shay (1994), the theme of betrayal by military commanders appears repeatedly in male Vietnam soldiers' discussion of what was most difficult about their experience. He traces the ways in which combat trauma affects individuals on basic levels of trust, personality, sense of meaning, and even humanity. For these soldiers, these betrayals included incompetent superiors, superiors who gave bad orders, and superiors who put them in harm s way, as well as betrayal by the military structure more generally. In fact, Tara s story aligns with much of Shay s thematic

analysis as she describes the disillusionment that most of her unit members faced over time. She describes new members starting out in their deployment with enthusiasm, but being systematically broken down the by atmosphere of the unit. However, Tara also felt the particular betrayal of her superiors that stemmed from her being a female soldier, a betrayal that was more relational and less professional, more intimate and certainly distinct. Although some male veterans have experienced MST and sexual harassment, the statistics show that female soldiers are particularly at risk. A recent study of Connecticut war veterans of OIF and OEF revealed that 14% of women reported experiencing MST as opposed to 1% of men (Haskell et al., 2010). If the military s response to this trauma is to disregard it or cover it up rather than punish the perpetrator, the military has then betrayed the soldier a level further. According to Herman (1997), All the perpetrator asks is for the bystander to do nothing. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain (p. 7). All the sergeant needed was for the status quo to be maintained, while Tara and her friend needed a significant paradigm shift in the minds of their superiors, as well as certain official safeguards set in place for female soldiers.

- Betrayal by Society and Community

Tara experienced a third type of betrayal detailed extensively by Herman (1997): a lack of acknowledgement of the trauma. Tara offers the following advice to those who may know returning veterans: Give them as much support as possible whether you believe what they ve gone through or not. You know some people don t believe. They think it s just a made up story because, you know, that couldn t happen or wouldn t happen.

Clearly Tara has encountered those who do not recognize the painful experiences she endured and has experienced the further trauma that results from that denial. She also wants to prevent others from having the same experience. Both Shay (1994) and Herman (1997) emphasize the need for communalization of trauma as a necessary part of the healing process. However, this is complicated when both one s immediate community of peers and the larger society do not recognize one’s trauma. One of Shay s (1994) major contributions to the literature

on veteran trauma is his insistence on units being deployed and returning home together in order to respect the bonds that soldiers form with each other and allow them to come together in pain and in healing. However, Tara s experience was never one of safety, never one of having a community. Her gender added a dangerous and complicated layer to military life, where her closest unit members were also her greatest threat, and where the very institution of the military betrayed her in ways that were distinct from those of her male peers.

In addition to the lack of acknowledgement of her experiences by the military community, Tara had the added struggle of returning to a societal community that might not be aware of or want to recognize her experiences because they do not align with their conceptions of the military. Members of the Lioness team also appeared to be painfully aware of this fact as they struggled to reintegrate into civilian life (McGlagan & Sommers, 1998). The lack of societal awareness is a fact that isolates female veterans from their families and precludes the possibility of other civilian bonds, as well as excepts them from the military structure of support.

- Betrayal in Friendship

Although the focus of Tara s interview was not on her relationships with other females in the military, the isolation of the female veteran experience begs the question of how women in the military relate to each other and to what extent they serve as sources of support, particularly as their numbers grow. Much as sibling relationships are strained in domestic violence situations perpetrated by trusted adults (Deprince & Freyd, 2002), it appears that Tara and her friend experienced a rift borne of the oppression and sexism present in their unit. Returning to betrayal trauma theory as a helpful conceptual framework, it would be wise to keep in mind the extent of the power differential that exists between military officers and their superiors, which mirrors that of family units—a fact also recognized by Shay (1994). After learning of the sergeant s repeated assaults on Sally, Tara tried to bring it to others attention through commenting on her sergeant s behavior. She stated, I told her what I did and she says I just made it worse. I felt so bad. I felt like I betrayed her. But I felt like I couldn t just sit there and not do anything. Tara was torn between honoring the promise

she made her friend that she would not share her secret, and reporting a criminal act that she knew was wrong. In an attempt to walk a tight rope between these conflicting goals, she tried to subtly draw others' attention to the superior's behavior. This backfired, however, as Sally felt betrayed and grew distant, leaving them both without the support they had initially had in each other.

As Tara became increasingly frustrated by the extra duty she received as a consequence of rebuffing her sergeant s advances, she became more aware of the beneficial treatment that Sally was receiving. She again tried to convince Sally to report her superior, and when she refused, Tara reported thinking, So I guess what you re doing right now, the publicity that you re getting now, was worth what he s doing to you. Not only did Tara feel she had betrayed her friend, but she also felt she had been betrayed by her friend, a friend who was also female and also the target of a patriarchal and oppressive unit, but who acquiesced to the circumstances in an effort to protect herself.

As they each retreated to their individual modes of operation Tara to her values and Sally to self-preservation they found that they unintentionally wounded each other and became estranged. In a context of a boys club," the women who did serve had a difficult time acting as a source of support for each other. As each struggled to survive in her own way, their isolation from each other grew, even as they faced a shared experience.

Conclusions

While Tara cannot stand in for or represent the experiences of all female soldiers, she can certainly speak to the complexity and individuality of the war experience. Until quite recently, much of our knowledge about war trauma has come from work with male veterans, largely from the Vietnam War. However, we live in an age where wars are being fought in a different cultural and social landscape, and we must acknowledge these realities or risk silencing important and desperate voices. Herman (1997) urges us to be aware of the importance of a social movement and a receptive social context. She argues that societies, like individuals, go through phases of remembrance and amnesia when it comes to traumatic history: Denial, repression, and

dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level (p. 2). She argues that, in the face of suffering, there is an instinct to turn away, to blame and silence the victim. We cannot afford to silence the voices of female soldiers at the very moment when we are asking the most of them.

Both Shay (1994) and Herman (1997) emphasize the importance of community to the mitigation of psychological distress and PTSD of veterans. In a context in which the female experience is marginal at best, less recognized and not mainstream, there is not a solid community upon which to lean. Herman (1997) highlights the fact that women, in comparison with men, are systematically at a disadvantage relative to the law when it comes to rape and sexual assault: At the basic level of acknowledgement, women commonly find themselves isolated and invisible before the law. The contradictions between women s reality and the legal definitions of the same reality are often so extreme that they effectively bar women from participation in the formal structures of justice. (p.72)

We are currently living in a political context that reproduces these experiences of marginalization, vulnerability, and invisibility for female veterans, who are largely unacknowledged in their service, as well as in their traumas. “Naming is one of the early stages of the communalization of trauma, says Shay, by rendering it communicable, however imperfectly (1994, p. 173). As a society, we must come to terms with the changing landscape of our military structure, so that we can adequately support our servicemen and servicewomen. The fear of engaging with this reality, the fear of sharing another s pain and acknowledging a new kind of pain in this case the particular ways in which trauma may distinctly impact female combat participants and servicewomen in general can only lead to a new wave of pernicious denial and repression. We hope that Tara s story can help elucidate some of the ways in which the female veteran story is qualitatively distinct from those of her male peers, the specific challenges and boundaries that she faces, and the particular ways in which the renegotiation of identity necessitated by a traumatic experience may be different for her than for her male counterparts.

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Containment and Resistance: Girls' writing in the juvenile justice system

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Girls within the American juvenile justice system are one of the most stereotyped and marginalized populations in the country. Because of the many systemic barriers between these girls and society outside of the system, pre- and misconceptions abound about what it means to be an incarcerated girl. How can we access incarcerated girls' expressions of their experiences, perspectives and feelings on their own terms? Although there are almost no accessible media artifacts produced by youth in the system, the webzine *The Beat Within* includes girls' creative writing and serves as a site to investigate whether existing avenues for their self-expression are also subject to the juvenile justice system's management. If this is the case, institutions limit and shape the writers' expressions and the discourse surrounding their subjectivities as incarcerated girls. In this study, I analyze how elements of *The Beat Within* align with public conceptions of girlhood in the contemporary United States, particularly those described through Anita Harris' dichotomy of the can-do and at-risk girl. What larger themes and discourses of girlhood are represented in or absent from the aforementioned text, and do they reinforce stereotypes of criminal, at-risk girlhood?

The Beat Within: A Weekly Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside is a weekly webzine of youth submissions from writing workshops within juvenile justice facilities. Since its director and senior editor, David Inocencio, co-founded the program in San Francisco in 1996, it has grown from a six-page magazine to span eight California county systems and satellite programs in six other states. The scope of the project has also grown significantly in terms of funding, staff and youth submissions. It has over 30 grant and institutional sponsors and is run through the Pacific News Services' New American Media, a foundation that focuses on youth cultures. There are four assistant editors and dozens of staff listed in each issue's table of contents, and the hundreds of works published in each issue are selected from over 2,000 weekly submissions (Maestretti n.p.). Additionally, each published piece is accompanied by a brief editor's response, signed "-The Beat," which comments on content or form. The issues run around 60-80 pages each and are divided into geographical sections with two subsections that begin each issue: Pieces of the Week and Co-Pieces of the Week. Each cover displays a presumably youth-drawn image and some issues include occasional pieces of artwork, none of which are

attributed. Despite the limitations of considering *The Beat Within* as only a media source, the ultimate stakes of this project are high. As Sinor states, Very few public texts document the daily experience of young women on their own terms. Representations of what it means to be a girl in today s world are primarily disseminated by the media and movie industry (248). This is especially true of girls in the American juvenile justice system, who are part of a growing demographic which is especially subject to physical surveillance and social control.

This study is informed by feminist criminology scholars, especially Meda Chesney-Lind, and uses Anita Harris theory of the can-do and at-risk girl as a framework for discussing *The Beat Within*'s representation of girlhood. Harris theorizes the can-do girl as a late-modern subject "who is flexible, individualized, resilient, self-driven, and self-made and who easily follows nonlinear trajectories to fulfillment and success" ("Future" 16). She is "optimistic" and "the most confident, resilient, and empowered of all the demographic groups affected by risk," groups which clearly include incarcerated girls (25, 16). The can-do girl model is highly problematic in its assumption that all girls can attain its status with enough drive or the right attitude, and that they must continuously adapt and re-imagine themselves to be successful subjects. The other side of girlhood subjectivities is the at-risk girl, an emb odiment of failure instead of success. Harris characterizes at-risk youth as those who are rendered vulnerable by their circumstances living in poverty, in unstable homes, in communities known for violence, drugs, crime, and so on, but in her discourse of the at-risk girl, the vulnerability is due to laziness and poor personal choices instead of structural disadvantage (Future 25). Economic class is clearly tied to personal values and social worth in this model, which aligns with the fact that, often due to systematic inequalities and bias, poor communities have disproportionately high incarceration rates.[1] Together, these discourses offer an ideal framework for considering the way delinquent girlhood is popularly imagined and managed, especially when used alongside feminist criminologist theory.

Feminist criminology theorists comprise a movement dedicated to scholarship and activism around the intersections

[1] See Bruce Western s 2006 book, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, for an example of the extensive work done on imprisonment and inequality.

of gender and crime. Feminist criminologists theorize how women s and girls pathways into crime are tied to their bodily victimization and how "criminal justice practices support patriarchal practices and worldviews (Chesney-Lind 8, 9). The correctional system actively enforces patriarchy, along with the racial, sexual and class order, through its processing and punishment regimes, as Chesney-Lind and Eliason note (43). Women convicted of crimes have not just violated the law, but have transgressed the gender role expectations that act as powerful tools for their social and structural management. Each of these concepts is vital to drawing a picture of girls experiences in the juvenile justice system, and I use the work of these scholars to help situate discourses of girlhood within larger systems of marginalization and power.

The situation of girls in the American juvenile justice system is both unique and urgent. Despite an overall drop in juvenile crime, girls are the fastest-growing segment of the system s population, increasing steadily from 19% of delinquency cases in 1991 to 26% in 2002 (Snyder and Sickmund 161). Growth in girls detention is not due to a significant increase in violent behavior, but instead to institutional factors, including gender bias in misdemeanor cases, changes in police practices and legal labeling of family violence, and, perhaps, a fundamental systemic failure to understand the particular social, legal and developmental issues facing contemporary girls (Justice 3). These insufficiently-addressed developmental concerns can include gender-specific needs in education, trauma recovery, family relationships, and parenting, and can be in regard to suicidal thinking, substance abuse, and medical needs (13). Girls are also detained differently: of juvenile delinquents from 1997 to 2003, one-third of females were detained in facilities compared to one-quarter of males, partially because females were more likely to be held for minor offenses (Snyder and Sickmund 208, 210). Gender disparities in detainment statistics are consistent with the well-documented use of detention as a means of social control of girls behavior considered dangerous to themselves (Justice 19). Feminist criminology asserts that even if girls behavior may be dangerous, the disparities in their detainment data compared to dangerous boys is not only behavior but gender-based, and must be addressed by structural change to the system. In addition to these numbers for gendered inequalities, the

system especially disadvantages black girls and other girls of color: the proportions of youth in correctional facilities are heavily skewed with 855 youth of color, including 377 black youth, in custody for every 95 detained white boys or girls (Snyder 213). Attention to these overlapping oppressions allows a more accurate understanding of the factors leading to the incarceration of girls and the discourses that attempt to frame their experiences.

One method that may help change this system of girls' disparate treatment and control is gender-specific programming. The U. S. Department of Justice recommends comprehensive programming that considers the gender-specific dangers and risks girls face while enabling "each girl to focus on her individual needs, to understand how risk factors have shaped her development, and to address issues that arise in her relationships with . . . family, peers, community, and society" ("Guiding Principles" n.p.). Significantly, the report also emphasizes teaching "girls to use their voice [sic], to speak for themselves, and to recognize that they have choices (n.p.). If incarcerated girls openly express their voices through media production, their success would reflect, and perhaps substantiate, the Department of Justice's recommendations. To investigate this and my initial questions, I surveyed youth-produced media from the juvenile justice system. There is very little available or accessible through Internet searches. I found evidence of three relevant artifacts: a one-time chapbook of boys writing; an informational comic funded by Making Policy Public and other justice organizations; and the creative writing webzine *The Beat Within*. All of these projects are facilitated, organized and funded by adults outside of the juvenile justice system: the chapbook was compiled by teacher and activist Kevin Coval, and youth were only tangentially involved in the comic through The Youth Justice Board, an after-school program. The content of *The Beat Within* is overwhelmingly produced by boys and is adult-structured, which shifts the focus of this project from girl-produced media to media in which girls have a potentially regulated or minoritized part. However, because it has the most youth contribution, and is the most accessible, longest-term project available, it became the focus of this study.

According to *The Beat Within* s website, its publishing and workshop programming appear to still be in place. Since

the completion of this project in January 2011, at which point nothing new had been posted for several weeks, ten more issues have appeared on the website; however, none of the PDF issue files include a date and the most recently dated blog entries on the website were posted in June 2010. Efforts to contact editor and co-founder David Inocencio and the office through e-mail and telephone have been as of yet unsuccessful; therefore, we have no information on pertinent details of the process, such as manuscript selection, facilitator training for workshops, or the role, gender or race of those who contribute the commentary published on each piece. These limitations restrict the potential scope of the analysis and conclusions of this project: I have attempted to disclaim assertions about the editors, girls involvement, and workshop process when it is not explicit in the zine's text or mission.

There is undoubtedly value, however, in considering the texts with only the information accessible to a mainstream reader, especially because of this project s concern with the public image of incarcerated girls and the accessibility of their own voices. In order to determine what discourses of girlhood are present in girls contributions to the zine, I use only the details present on its website and printed in its pages. I wanted to survey girls contributions across several issues, and I chose to focus on the featured Pieces of the Week in each of the three issues most recently posted to the website: 15.44, 15.45, and 15.46. In addition, I include the Pieces of the Week from issue 15.23, as the Editor s Note for that issue presents gender roles as a theme. It is important to note that in the Pieces of the Week sections, boys wrote approximately seven out of eight published pieces: each section ranged from 24 to 37 entries, and girls wrote 3 to 5 entries in each, resulting in 16 pieces for analysis. Many of the authors names, such as K Jack, Lil Dee, and Na Na Holly, read like tags or handles which are often carefully chosen to present a specific persona and may not explicitly mark gender. Because of the difficulty of identifying the writers' genders, I included for analysis only the entries by authors with marked feminine names, such as Miss Lady and Caressa, and those signed with gender-ambiguous names whose pieces described first-person female experiences. Despite limitations, in order to determine marked feminine names, I used Internet search engines for common pronoun associations and searched online multilingual name databases. For all

issues, I used discourse analysis to discuss patterns and subjectivities that emerged in the girls contributions and editors commentaries following a framework built on Anita Harris model of the can-do and at-risk girl (Future).

It is useful to introduce the girls contributions to *The Beat Within*, which identifies itself as a webzine, alongside a discussion of girls' zine writing and how that theory can apply to the contemporary incarcerated girl. Harris asserts that zines emerged "at a time when girlhood itself has a new cultural presence, and young women are negotiating a cultural fascination with, but simultaneous silencing of, their experiences (Resistance 45). Girl power and girls as a relatively new consumer base have led to more public attention to girls lives, and the taboo of incarceration adds to that fascination while necessitating the silence of its residents. The institutional control of the publication s contributors complicates its zine label because that medium was originally meant to create a space where young women can communicate and organize together outside surveillance, silencing and appropriation (46). Zines have the potential to allow female writers to act without fear of censure; Kristen Schilt has formulated the term c/overt resistance" to characterize girls' zine writing, asserting that zines allow girls to express themselves "to like-minded peers but still remain covert and anonymous to authority figures" (83, 81).

In fact, audience management has been characterized as extremely important to zine writers, especially for those girls who have been victimized by their peers, authority figures, and larger society (Schilt 79, Sinor 255). The community that can form between zine contributors links girls across geographic boundaries, which *The Beat Within* may facilitate through its inclusion of youth voices across state and county lines (Sinor 244). As the selections from the publication also demonstrate, "[g]irl zinesters write from the personal, telling stories, relating experiences, and ranting about inequality. . . Explorations of body image, sexuality, desire, love, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are common topics (246). A supportive community of other girls in a safe, expressive and encouraging space is vital to traditional zine production. Whether *The Beat Within* offers girls this experience will help determine its value to girls particularly, rather than for incarcerated youth in

general that the organization aims to serve (“About Us” n.p.).

In addition to identifying their target population, the mission statement of *The Beat Within* emphasizes developing literacy and self-expression. One of their modes of encouraging critical thought is offering weekly writing themes in the workshops for each week s publication. The Editor s Note in Issue 15.23 asks, [Do] you believe there are certain roles that only men should play or only women should play in life? Do not just say, Women should not be airline pilots or Only men should be soldiers. Explain why you think so (n.p.). This prompt is approachable and unthreatening, aligning with some of the D.O.J. goals for youth programming. A longer Editor s Note about gender roles was meant to be published in 15.23, but instead appears in a blog entry for 15.26: staff member Julia introduces that week s topic by foregrounding her personal problem with gender stereotypes. She describes how society teaches children to conform to roles that originated from the desire to oppress women, then argues against the idea of inherent gender roles, closing with a plea challenging the readers to do what makes them happy and to let others be who they want to be (Editor s Note n.p.). As an administrator and possible workshop facilitator, Julia is clearly working from a feminist viewpoint within a male-dominated system, which may offer some girls some community, and at least speaks well for the overt gender politics of *The Beat Within*.

After having analyzed relevant submissions, I suggest that the prototype of the can-do girl is institutionally encouraged and the at-risk girl is overly-regulated. These first examples are of the can-do girl, who is empowered through social approval and, in the case of misfortune, is saved by her own good decision management: she has full access to the kind of capitalist and individualist bootstraps by which she pulls herself out of setbacks, independent of both social services and the class stigma with which they are associated. The zine aims to contribute to the can-do girl s social empowerment, to provide incarcerated youth with consistent opportunity to share their ideas and life experiences in a safe space that encourages literacy, self-expression, some critical thinking skills, and healthy, supportive relationships with adults and their community (About Us n.p.). As Harris notes, with this kind of institutional support, it would appear at first that girls could express

their perspectives better than ever (Resistance 43). However, institutional support for these girls often means institutional control, and in the contemporary context this surveillance and control often takes form through invitation to speech (43). Within this framework, it is significant that the can-do girl tends to invoke true support even while under institutional surveillance.

The can-do girl is typically too motivated and driven toward normative success to perform traditional risk behaviors. One girl contributor in particular addresses drug use and the law in I Don t Agree With Prop 19 by Ariel from San Francisco. Ariel argues against legalizing marijuana, and in closing, states, "I disagree with this legalization, but if they do, I would like it if they implement rules to prevent people from getting more addicted and smoke it more. If this happens, it would be a bad example for those who don t smoke including children and young people (22). *The Beat* replies, If all people thought the same way as you towards a better future, and the well being of this generation, this world would be a different and better one...You have a very special gift that is your positive guidance and your preoccupation towards others (15.45 22). Ariel displays an investment in following the law, and creates new regulations to amend problems instead of subverting the law. She shows appropriate nurturing instinct toward children and even smokers, and she confidently rejects the legislation while part of a peer group who may disagree. *The Beat* responds with lavish praise, billing Ariel as a role model and a hope for the future, especially due to her attention to the needs of others. In this case and following examples, the editors comments construct a particular frame through which a reader might experience each girl s writing; additionally, the comments potentially delegitimize alternative readings. Here, the response to Ariel determines her work as an illustration of the kind of normatively ideal girlhood and girl s voice most valued in the space of the zine.

If a girl is in the juvenile justice system, her path to success is necessarily a nonlinear trajectory which requires extra motivation and flexibility; in a study of the California juvenile justice system, 85% of its incarcerated girls had been suspended or expelled from school at least once (Justice 10). Possibly because academic success is promoted as a cure for the disease of delinquency, the two girls

submissions that talk about educational plans and goals are well-received (Harris, Future 28). When Freedom Rings by Phina from Santa Clara details very specific plans about college applications, placement tests, and scholarships, sharing that she can t wait to be a college girl (9). *The Beat* responds, “We love it!” and confides that they “already have a vision of how big [she s] going to make it (15.44 9). They then ask what her plans are, supporting her own agency in the process. Davina from Alameda s poem, Lost In My Own World,” does not offer plans, but starts out despondent: Lost in a world / And it s so cold, then announces that she wants to feel like royalty, That s where I want to be / Go to college, live my life / Do everything right (1-2; 18-20). She shows at least an implicit awareness of what is right and that it involves forward motion toward normative success. *The Beat* has faith in her: [S]tay strong, Davina, keep trying, they say. We know you can make it to college and make real choices for your own life (15.46 8). They trust her to take the appropriate steps, and, in this framework, if she does succeed, her success will undoubtedly be self-made.

This success is in contrast with the at-risk girl s failure. Her institutional disadvantage is re-imagined as personal failing, and within a discussion about the justice system, this illustrates the criminalizing of victimization which is an important factor for the at-risk framework (Chesney-Lind 14-17). If an at-risk girl makes poor choices, especially surrounding early pregnancy or problematic consumption, she needs to be monitored or controlled; however, that same control can be used to keep them on track” if risk factors are identified early (25). Girls’ systematic management is not egalitarian: as Harris asserts, [T]he juvenile justice system serves to keep some young women s experiences, difficulties, and bodies out of view—specifically, the poor and nonwhite; even when race and class are not explicit in the works quoted here, they are undoubtedly factors of lived experience in the system which need to be read alongside the overt at-risk girl narrative (Future 112). This narrative is illustrated below by three girls pieces contrasted alongside The Beat s comments.

Niarenee from Fresno contributes the poem Tearing Apart, expressing confusion, frustration, and despair. This excerpt from the middle of the poem demonstrates Niarenee s struggles, questions, compassion and self-positioning:

I am always being used
Why do people use
Why do people fight
Why do people die every night
I wanna know why
I just want to cry
Think of all the young that die
Hopefully, they went to the big mansion in the sky
[. . .]
I'm a good person with many flaws. Don't make me mad cuz I snap back like Jaws. (8-21)

Above, Niarenee describes the trauma of conflict and death and then her response of sorrow and hope. *The Beat* replies, We can t change everything. Some things we just have to accept. We can start with focusing our thoughts on those things we can change (15.23 10). This lecture dismisses Niarenee s writing and experience despite the mission statement emphasizing safe space and creative expression. Perhaps because she self-described as angry, or because she included no self-regulating plan for changing her situation, the editor s response positions her as at-risk and in need of control. The effects of being positioned as risk-takers are felt in the bodies of those girls incarcerated, detained and contracepted by court order (Harris, "Resistance" 42). There is no affirmation of Niarenee's voice.

Davina from Alamenda contributed another poem, "In My Mind," in a different issue. Because *The Beat Within* works with over 700 youth, editors relationships to contributors are unclear; therefore, I treat Davina s poems as independent works. In My Mind contains a plea for freedom between lines describing discipline, drug use, and gang membership, and closes with words that could be construed as self-destructive: This is what we ve come to / Me killing me before I get to you / But no one can ever fit back in my shoe" (57-59). The Beat does not offer support, resources, or encouragement regarding any of these issues. Instead, they reply, Nice poem! What can you actually change about your life? Both inside and outside. What can you do to stay free once you get out? Who can help you? Who won t help you? (15.45 22). They do not directly manage her actions, but do imply she needs to be more like the self-managed can-do girl who would already have taken

steps toward success.

Along these lines, it is important to note that the at-risk state is depicted as a set of personal limitations that can be overcome through sufficient effort," and, presumably, the surveillance and management of authority (Harris, Future, 25). In an illustration of this factor, Bella contributes Blind, a poem about regret and looking forward to freedom:

> Drugs won t make you happy
> I will never again
> Choose drugs over family
> [ ]
> I ll give you my all
> And all I ask for in return is
> Forgiveness! (24-33)

She identifies her at-risk behavior(s) and announces her changed priorities, promising to work as hard as possible toward freedom and self-management. From *The Beat*: Thanks for sharing that with us, Bella. You have a very powerful voice. Please never forget that, and keep sharing! (15.23 5). With this response, Bella can be read as in-between the at-risk girl requiring adult control and the can-do girl receiving positive feedback on her goals: the editor offers a positive but generic response, perhaps waiting to see what Bella keeps sharing and whether she has the self-motivation to pull herself out of the at-risk subjectivity.

The can-do and at-risk model of girls subjectivities informs critical analyses of contemporary discourses of girlhood; however, the girl as cultural resister is not necessarily part of popular conceptions of girls. Especially within a system of physical containment, the spaces and discourses [girls] can use to complicate contemporary representations of girlhood and articulate resistance are diminishing as a consequence of surveillance, colonization and commodification," although programs like *The Beat Within* could potentially help (Harris, Resistance 43). However, the sample culled for this study indicates that the zine does not indulge resistant themes.

To demonstrate *The Beat* s reactions to girls resistance, I begin with two poems which have a similar theme but

garner different tones of response. As Chesney-Lind notes, incarcerated girls are more likely to have been physically victimized than girls outside the system, and two poems from the sample describe sexual assault (8). Johniee from Alameda wrote Something Called Hope, a graphic description of sexual assault that closes with, What I m saying is no joke / So I wonder will there ever be hope? (14-15). She asserts the pain and truth of her story and asks for help. The Beat s response is very supportive, repeating that [T]here is hope and there is help," then offering a confidential and free hotline, emphasizing that Johniee is not alone ("15.45" 21).

In contrast, Atirra from Alameda s piece, Mom Wasn t There, uses an angry and resistant tone rather than a scared one; her distress centered around an absent mother figure. Of 34 lines, the fourth and fifth are, "You allowed me to get raped, / And when I tried to tell you the truth you didn t want to believe me . Other lines repeat, I ll be damned, and at the end Atirra repeats, I lied to you (10-11, 16-17; 43-44). Atirra resists the normative constructs of a deferential daughter or despondent victim. An editor replies, There s a whole lot of anger jumping at us from your page. We can tell that your mother's behavior really pisses you off. Have you told her how you feel? (15.44 15). There is no address either of her assault or of her courage in sharing her story. Atirra s anger is treated as hostile and unproductive instead of powerful and agential, while Johniee s sorrowful description of victimization and subsequent survival is rewarded with institutional and emotional support.

As opposed to Atirra s resistance of normative roles, other girls write in critique of institutional forces that affect girls' lives. "Evil Eye" by Tashanna from Alameda addresses the eye of the media as it influences body image and conceptions of beauty. It s a shame you re so smooth how you influence on TV," she says, closing with:

> You make the bad look good in most situations
> All these fake imitations, fake boobs, and fake
> Attitudes but its something I live by
> But is it really the bad man s rule
> That I repress each day (12-16)

Besides its media commentary, Tashanna s poem reveals that popular ideals are something I live by and illustrates

the kind of resistance referenced in Angela McRobbie s theory that some girls reject the de-individualized school system by exaggerating the femininity that is tacitly encouraged (qtd. in Hudson 40). An editor responds: Is the evil eye the media? Is it the image they place on ads of how a young lady SHOULD look according to society? Which is usually an anorexic blond haired woman? What s beautiful to you? (15.45 9). *The Beat* assumes details about the kind of appearance or femininity that is (or should be?) threatening to Tashanna, and that she tries to imitate: Tashanna s words do not specify what fake is to her, while *The Beat* fills in that space with the most normative ideal, while labeling the women who represent it. They only ask what Tashanna is resisting and striving to attain after defining it for her. Her choice to omit this information or, in fact, any girl s choice to *not* speak can also have resistant power. As Harris states, [T]he act of refusal to speak to unworthy listeners re-positions young women from an accessible and often vulnerable population to autonomous agents entitled to accountability, self-representation and informed participation (Resistance 53). I have no information on which incarcerated girls participate in *The Beat Within* workshops, but it is worth considering that choosing not to submit personal writing to public commentary and display is a resistant action, especially if a girl feels or understands that her voice may be regulated or devalued. The knowledge that the zine has a larger male than female audience, and the awareness that her writing will likely appear surrounded by boys work, may be an additional disincentive for explicit expression and may encourage subversion of the workshop system.

Considering the weight of institutional constraints on incarcerated girls discourse, what are the expectations of and possibilities for programs that explicitly value their voices? Although this study has limitations, other work has been done on what programming for incarcerated youth could look like. For example, the American and National Bar Associations have identified that there is currently "a glaring dearth of appropriate, developmentally sound, culturally competent, gender-specific prevention, diversion and treatment programs for girls in the justice system (Justice 4). Youth outreach and empowerment programs like *The Beat Within* seem to aim to address this problem: for example, the zine's mission emphasizes building relationships

outside of the system, which is another recommendation of the report, and several of the editors comments showed the kind of culturally sensitive practices with girls the Bar Associations want to see identified and supported by the system (5, 27). However, Barbara Hudson reports that even fully-trained and presumably culturally sensitive social workers and teachers have conceptions of ideal femininity that can be difficult to separate from the girls they serve (38-39). When the situation is complicated by prominent stereotypes of incarcerated girls, it is unsurprising that, as Hudson concludes, even well-meaning workers want teenage girls to fall into traditional gender performance roles. In an ideal reformulation of *The Beat Within* or any gender-specific programming according to Department of Justice standards, staff and educator awareness training on girls' particular challenges, strengths, and need for a safe and productive expressive outlet would be required. That outlet could take many forms, but recommendations for program structure that could help facilitate open expression include using sensitive female staff, including girls' voices in their activities, and specific attention to self-esteem building and building healthy relationships (Garcia and Lane 238).[2]

There are several potential avenues for further research on this topic. The rich archive of 220 free and easily-accessible issues of *The Beat Within* present youth writing on several discourses of at-risk and can-do youth, as well as creative writing and other social discourses such as affect, race, class, kin, violence, and resistance. Race and racialized experiences in the system are especially urgent issues, given that, [I]n the U.S. juvenile justice system at least, race frequently overrides class as a stratification device, such that unlike white girls, African-American and Latina girls are suspended at almost the same rates as their male counterparts (Harris, Future 111). How do these youth negotiate race in the system, and how do they represent it through writing? If researchers were able to access information on the process behind workshops, facilitator training, submission selection, and youth involvement at *The Beat Within*, they could add valuable

[2] Please refer to Garia and Lane s 2010 article, Looking in the Rearview Mirror: What Incarcerated Women Think Girls Need From The System, for recommendations on programming for incarcerated girls and women not specific to creative expression.

perspective to the assumptions and conclusions drawn in this paper. It is likely that incarcerated girls produce much more media through means inaccessible by the Internet; those texts could offer a means of comparison with this publication as well as raise questions about incarcerated girls resources, audiences and leadership. Finally, what may be the most important avenue of study surrounding any girls is to involve girls themselves in the process through an ethnographic study. How do they experience the justice system, and how would they like to represent themselves? What programming or conditions would make their lives better and their voices better heard?

After examining *The Beat Within*, the most visible and prominent media to which incarcerated girls in America contribute, it seems to support Harris views that:

> young women are encouraged to speak their stories and provide narratives of their experiences, but at the same time they risk these narratives being scrutinized, interrogated, appropriated and depoliticized. In short, it could be argued that the more young women speak, the less free they are (Resistance 44).

The zine is part of the larger institutions of the correctional system and mainstream society, both of which perhaps inherently subscribe to the can-do and at-risk girl discourses. Even when in the minority, the editorial voices of the publication which regulate and limit girls expression and are part of the larger story of media production in the juvenile justice system. The avenues to this production need to be reimagined as carriers of girls authentic voices: only then will the system help support girls personal expression and community-building while offering a way for mainstream culture (and policy makers) to understand the experiences, needs, and politics of voices so often silenced.

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Troubled Discourses among University Students: A Student-driven Gender Project in Turkey

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* *Due to confidentiality concerns, identifying factors of individuals have been removed and pseudonyms used throughout the article.*

Introduction

How do university students in Turkey involved in social responsibility projects that address gender issues conceptualize the challenges in their community? How do they interact, create, and address issues of gender equality in a course specifically designed to foster social responsibility and social justice?

The modest rise in the number of courses at Turkish universities that can be loosely defined as social responsibility courses form the basis for student-led approaches toward issues of social injustice, encouraging students to take active roles in civil society [and deal] with various problems (etindamar & Hopkins, 2008, p. 405). Understanding students perceptions toward concepts of human rights and social justice within a gender project at Sabancı University s Civics Involvement Project (CIP) courses can shed light on the concerns of the university students at private institutions in Turkey today. Such an understanding can help give a context for educators and students who want to better co-create social justice both inside and outside the classroom. This article is part of a larger study of the perceptions of academic communities toward concepts such as human rights, citizenship and social responsibility, which aims to help us understand how people in these courses think about their roles in both Turkish and global society.

This paper will be divided into five sections. First, an overview of the Civic Involvement Project in general and the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* (Gender) Project in particular will be provided. Second, a summary of the literature on gender equality and education in Turkey will be given, drawing on Turkish and international feminist and post-structuralist scholarship. A brief description of the research design will follow. Fourth, the article will delve into the concerns and tensions articulated by the research participants. Finally, I will conclude with an examination of the avenues for future research in the area of student-led gender projects.

The Civic Involvement Project at Sabancı University

Sabancı University in İstanbul was founded in 1996 as one of the first private institutions (called *foundation*

universities) of higher education in Turkey. The mission of the university is to

> develop competent and confident individuals, enriched with the ability to reflect critically and independently, as well as a strong sense of social responsibility. (Cetindamar & Hopkins, 2008, p. 405)

Within the higher education community in Turkey, Sabancı University in particular stands out as a leader in introducing compulsory courses in social responsibility in keeping with this mission. Thus, the first academic year at Sabancı University (1999-2000) included the establishment of the Civics Involvement Project (CIP). This mandatory two-semester course for undergraduate students aims to enhance students understandings of participatory citizenship and engage students in peer-led projects concerning human rights, the environment, and gender equality, among others. The program is designed to give students an understanding that every individual not only can, but also has a responsibility to contribute positively to society" (Sabancı University, 2005). In addition to the mandatory CIP course, the university offers optional CIP projects outside of Istanbul during summer and winter breaks, which are open to students from any university. The Project Members travel to primary schools in disadvantaged, often rural areas of Turkey to conduct one- to two-week projects covering an array of issues such as children s rights, human rights, the environment, gender equality and cultural heritage workshops.

The educators and students involved in CIP fall into five categories. The CIP Staff, which coordinates, manages and assists the students in their projects, consists of one Manager, four CIP Officers, one CIP Consultant and one Administrative Affairs Officer. In addition, there are four types of students: Project Team Members, Volunteers, Supervisors and Advisors. First, the Project Team Members are students often in their preparation or first year at Sabancı.[1] These students are required to take CIP as a core course. The second

[1] As Sabancı University is an English-medium university, prospective students must pass an English entrance exam; otherwise, they spend a preparation year of intensive English classes in order to raise their language ability to the appropriate level for their department.

type ofstudents is CIP Volunteers, many of whom have already completed their mandatory CIP project and want to continue to participate in a non-supervisory capacity as Project Team Members. Volunteers can also be non-Sabancı University students who want to be involved in the optional CIP field projects. Third, there are Supervisors, students who have already completed their mandatory CIP project and want the opportunity to take more of a leadership role in the project. If their applications are successful, their duties will include facilitating communication between the CIP office and the Team Members, organizing meetings, guiding decision-making processes regarding workshop topics, and gathering necessary materials. Finally, Advisors, who are generally advanced students, have voluntarily applied to act as Advisors to Project Supervisors and have previous experience as Supervisors themselves. They give input to the Supervisors about effective strategies for leadership or learning challenges. Although the CIP Office does provide some training from outside NGOs and counselors, the primary transmission method is peer-led and experiential; thus, in spite of a loose supervisory structure (see Figure 1-1), the emphasis is on collaboration and student agency, with the permanent CIP Staff of educators serving in a facilitative capacity.

Despite its status as a required course, CIP does allow some flexibility as to which project is chosen and how the project is carried out. Students form project teams, which might focus on, for example, human rights or environmental issues, and draw on a variety of local knowledge and literature. They design and implement a project, which must contribute to society, usually in disadvantaged areas near the university.

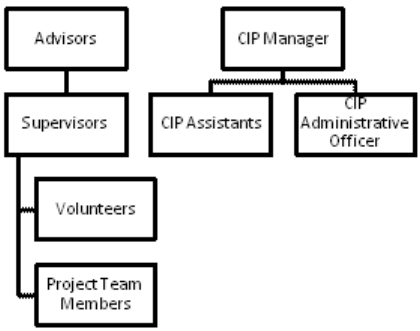

Figure 1-1. CIP Supervisory Structure at Sabanci University. *Source*: (Adapted from Cetindamar & Hopkins 2008, p. 406)

In addition to its own student body, CIP is also being incorporated into 18 more universities through the efforts of the Sabancı CIP staff with varying degrees of success (Cetindamar & Hopkins, 2008). Interest in the project around the Turkish educational community has increased to the point that talks are taking place regarding CIP implementation at other Turkish universities.

Toplumsal Cinsiyet (Gender) is a project component of the mandatory Civic Involvement Projects (CIP) course at Sabancı University which aims to investigate and discuss aspects of gender within their group. There are two sections of the project, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Projesi I and Toplumsal Cinsiyet Projesi II, with a total project team membership of 30, of which 22 are men and 8 are women. The goals of the project are threefold. First, the project aims to educate university students participating in this project about gender issues not only in Turkey in general but also in their own lives. The second aim is to educate the whole student body at Sabancı University on the issues and impacts of gender by organizing workshops and other campus-wide activities. Finally, the third goal is to go beyond the campus. Thus, the target population starts with themselves and aims to slowly expand to their immediate environment and beyond. The two Supervisors and the Advisor meet weekly to plan the curriculum, based on their previous experience with the project. Both project Supervisors had previously been Project Members in the 2009-2010 academic year, and the current Advisor had been their own Supervisor the year before. Thus, in addition to drawing on materials such as current newspaper articles and printed literature such as F. Helvacıoğlu's *Ders Kitaplarında Cinsiyetçilik* [Sexism in Textbooks] (1996), the project leaders draw on shared collective knowledge and experience to co-create the curriculum with their Team Members, who are free to, and during observed meetings a core few of whom often did, contribute their own ideas about what the gender project should entail and what topics should be addressed.

In the Fall Semester 2010, the two sections met weekly together in a single classroom. The activities during this time were mainly discussion-based, aiming to engage the critical thinking skills of the university students, in order to fulfill the first stated goal of the project. These discussions were led by the two project Supervisors and students, and covered a variety of related topics. Topics included discussions

and analyses of newspaper articles regarding incidents of rape, gender-related violence, transvestism and homosexuality. Other activities included Supervisor-led analyses of gender stereotypes evident in commercials and comics, as well as the perpetuation of such stereotypes in Turkish primary school textbooks. In the time allotted for the research, the Supervisors and Project Members of *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* were focused on the first project goal of educating themselves. An avenue of future research would be to observe the continuation of the project in pursuit of its other goals.

Literature Review

In order to sift through the data gathered in this study, I review critical moments in Turkish history and draw on relevant theoretical scholarship within a gender framework that will help to meaningfully interpret the intricacies of university students perceptions toward gender and LGBT issues in the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project. Scholars both in Turkey and from abroad can help to illuminate the development of women s rights and LGBT rights in a country where West and East have co-existed for centuries (Kardam, 2005).

Reforms regarding gender equality in Turkey are often considered to have started during the time of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the Tanzimat era of 1839-1876, when a push for women's education was initiated (Gündüz, 2004). Significant changes in how women were treated accelerated rapidly after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent creation of the Turkish Republic, when, as part of the driving force for modernization embodied by the Republic s founder Mustafa Kemal Atat¸rk, initiatives for gender equality were advanced. Within the broader Kemalist ideology of modernization stressing secularism, nationalism and militarism, these gender equality initiatives included the banning of polygamy and of the veil, as well as the legislation of universal suffrage. The Kemalist idea of the modern woman was an unveiled, professional woman in Western dress, exemplified best by Atatürk's own adopted daughter, Sabiha Gökçen, who became the world's first female fighter pilot (White, 2003). With this period s multitude of reforms both related to women s rights and beyond came further challenges, due to the unequal impacts of these reforms across the country. Gündüz (2004) summarizes the subsequent development of

the women s movement as one predominantly restricted to the incremental extension of this Kemalist ideology of modernization and the modern woman, which focused almost exclusively on rights-based legislation such as the right to vote and the right to divorce. Gündüz points out that the modernization movement regarded the women as problems to be solved with the codification of certain rights and failed, along with the emerging women s movements, to address the structural violence of a deeply patriarchal society or the intersections of class and ethnicity.

The early 1990s saw increasing changes in gender issues as Turkish society started to move out from the shadow of the repressive 1980 military coup, which de-politicized civil society. In 1993, Women for Women s Human Rights, then called New Ways, was founded. This powerful NGO contributed significantly to legislation both locally and internationally that promoted women s human rights. In the same year, Tansu Ciller became Turkey's first female Prime Minister and, like Gökçen, served as a powerful, if controversial, symbol of the modern Turkish woman. Other important changes in gender equality included the 1998 Law on the Protection of the Family, which legislated further protections for women and children and provided channels for their immediate removal from spheres of violence. Gündüz's study on women's movements suggests that despite such legislation, protests and criticism of State policies continue because the State, while seeing itself as a leader in gender equality, contributes to the maintenance of inequality, discrimination and injustice through judiciary policies which afford judges the power to decrease the legal sentencing recommendation for murder in cases of honor killings, as well as the continuance of a system of unequal pay (2004).

With every piece of legislation achieved by local and international reform initiatives, scholarship demonstrates that legislation is not enough. Levin (2007) sees a patriarchal Turkish culture as highly resistant to changes increasing gender equality and protections for women. Although such claims of cultural resistance to gender equality are common, scholars like Kardam (2005) and Ert¸rk (2006) consistently argue against a simplistic understanding of the situation. Ert¸rk (2006) diminishes the importance of culture in the struggle for women s liberation, understanding it rather as a political problem by tracing the role of women in Turkish society from

the 1920s to the present and analyzing public representation of women within competing paradigms. Problematizing the issue further, Kardam (2005) argues for a shifting, fluid system of interacting dualisms that embody a system of values conducive or otherwise to gender equality. She rejects the notion of the West as associated with modernity, human rights, and the secular versus the Islamic world as oppressive and intolerant. Her conclusion is that a false dichotomy of Islamic-secular prevents open dialogue and creates a fixed barrier where the reality is much more fluid. Showing instead that both head-scarved women, the symbol of the Islamic world, and modern secular women borrow and learn from each other, Kardam demonstrates the need for an understanding of women s issues that respects not only women s heterogeneity but also the fluid borders and boundaries that they navigate.

Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholarship on gender and LGBT issues in Turkey and in Turkish education has expanded rapidly. Studies on honor killings, virginity examinations, and violence against women (Parla, 2001; Rodriguez, 2009) expose the discrimination many women in Turkey, including young girls and women at schools, continue to suffer. Boys too who do not conform to expected modes of behavior become marginalized, and prevailing attitudes toward lesbians and gays at the university level are predominantly negative (Gelbal & Dyan, 2006). Analyses of textbooks expose deeply patriarchal attitudes of men as strong, active and militaristic and women as passive and helpless (Çayır, 2007; Altınay, 2004; Esen, 2007; Helvacıoğlu, 1996) in a machista, hyper-heterosexual culture. These depictions, which are perpetuated through the education system, impact how men and women are socialized to interact with each other. Esen (2007) explores how, despite initiatives in curriculum reform, the textbooks, and thus the schools, contribute to the perpetuation of sexism and homophobia. She pushes instead for schools [as] living spaces where individuals are empowered in order to reach the ideal of just and equal society (13). The majority of this literature focuses on the content that students receive at the primary and secondary levels (Rankin, B., & Aytaç, 2006; Esen, 2007; Helvacıoğlu, 1996). However, students do not absorb social norms just through textbooks, but also through interaction with each other and their instructors.

It is not only gender norms that are transmitted through school textbooks, but national and ethnic stereotypes as well

(Altınay, 2004). Turkey's largest ethnic minority are the Kurds, whose portrayal in school textbooks is transformed, according to Altınay, into a non-minority--rather Turks of a different nature. At the same time, her book also uncovers systematic perceptions of Kurds as "uncivilized" by many educated Turks, a finding shared by Saraçoğlu's 2010 study of how the middle class views Kurdish migrants, which largely uncovered systematic prejudices against Kurds as disruptive forces who, among other preconceptions, unfairly siphon off benefits.

Both Altınay and Saraçoğlu provide a spectrum of historical perspectives on Kurdish-Turkish relations since the founding of the Republic. These relations have been punctuated by the creation of a new national identity, one that determinedly ignored the existence of all other Muslim elements (the Kurds, the Cerkes, the Laz) as distinct ethnic groups. Articulate theories of total denial of their distinct identities would soon follow" (Altınay, 2004, p. 19). Since the late 1970s, violence between the Kurdish-nationalist PKK and the Turkish military has increased and ravaged the Southeast. Following a 1980 military coup, a law was enacted in 1983 that formalized the prohibition of languages other than Turkish as the mother tongue and in education. With the rise to power of the AK Party and its pro-EU stance, minority rights for the Kurds have begun to be slowly won. The ban on Kurdish-medium education was abolished in 2002, which allowed for private language schools. In 2004, the first Kurdish-language school was established (MRGI, 2007), but closed four months later because the government had provided no funding. Education and job opportunities are sporadic at best, and many Kurds migrate west for financial and personal gain (Saraçoğlu, 2010). It is within this complex historical and educational context that this study is situated.

Research Design

This article is part of a larger study on the Civic Involvement Project course that aims to investigate how students and educators perceive of core human rights and citizenship concepts, as per the goal of the course. The argument is put forth that this peer-led project-based course does not just raise awareness but also creates a need for critical thinking and analysis and fosters a respect for

human rights and participatory democracy. Exploring the participants perceptions of these core concepts of CIP is vital to understanding the challenges facing education for human rights. During the course of the research, the CIP students in general (and, naturally, the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* students in particular) continuously raised gender issues, leading to the data forming the basis for this article.

The study took place from September 2010 to January 2011, including voluntary projects in Summer 2010 and Winter 2011 during breaks. One-hundred and fifty questionnaires were administered, which gauged perceptions of human rights and citizenship using an imaginary island scenario based on Lidija Koulouh-Westin s 2004 study and conducted 50 interviews, which explored these perceptions in-depth in order to gain a picture of how university students think about human rights and citizenship. Seven academic year projects and two voluntary projects were observed. Two of the academic year projects, offered during the 2010 Fall semester of the mandatory CIP course, were the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* projects, which are the focus of this article. Out of the 150 total completed questionnaires for the study, 23 were completed by *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* Project Members and Supervisor. Six *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* students participated in the interviews. Finally, I observed this project of 30 students every Monday during the Fall Semester. The observational and interview data reveal university students concerns with gender issues in Turkey when discussing human rights.

Summary of Results

In the course of my research on perceptions of human rights and citizenship, my observations of the two *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* projects unearthed a series of gendered discourses that I wish to examine in the following sections. These discourses centered around the following challenges in their community: the problematic and troubled gender relations when coupled with different ethnic identities, the inability or unwillingness of the State to protect women from violence, and the ability of projects like these to effect change regarding gender and LGBT issues in the community.

In many cases, these discourses were echoed in other, non-gender related projects, which suggests a shared

perception of gender issues in Turkey by these university students. In an interview at the start of the semester, Elif, a student in the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet Projesi*, expressed surprise at the composition of the two sections. In previous years, she explained, the team had been primarily made up of women and had been smaller and more intimate. This year, the Supervisors had agreed to open two sections and both were filled to the maximum capacity with a combined total of 30, of which only eight total were women. Elif shared with me that many of the young men freely admitted that they had chosen the project because it met on campus and was thus more convenient. This information suggested that the team might show a more diverse range of attitudes toward or understandings of gender issues than those whose members joined specifically because of interest in the topic.

Although these are preliminary findings based on observations, interviews and questionnaires, this analysis hopes to offer a taste of how these university students in Turkey involved in gender projects conceptualize the challenges in their community as well as how they interact and address issues of gender-related discrimination.

The Intersection of Ethnic Identity and Gender

> Kurdish women have more babies than us [Turks]. In 10 years, there will be more Kurds than Turks. (Uğur, Team Member)

During the observations of the project and interviews with the Supervisors and Team Members, the intersection between ethnic identity and gender repeated itself and revealed itself in complex ways. As Kardam s (2005) shifting dualism model suggests, binaries such as an Islamic-Western, Kurdish-Turkish or East-West may superficially help one to understand the perceptions of gender and ethnic identity held by many Turkish university students. However, these binaries coupled with attributed characteristics such as the "benefits-scrounging" Kurds (Saraçoğlu, 2010) or "modern, educated" Turks are deeply problematic and not sufficient in explaining how individuals in the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* more fluidly understand issues of gender equality both broadly and in relation to human rights.

The above quote, which came early in the academic year during a regular Monday evening project meeting, was made by a male Team Member named Uğur during an overall discussion of newspaper articles selected for their relevant topics. The speaker clearly assumed that everyone in the classroom was one of us: a Turk, enlightened, educated and practicing planned parenthood. The Kurds, on the other hand, were constructed not simply as the Other, but specifically as a fertile female Other. Thus, the woman s fertile body is the locus of the population panic expressed by Uğur. This panic, however, is not restricted to men in CIP or even to the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project. Esra, a member of the *Human Rights* project, made a remarkably similar statement in conversation with the researcher when she said, The women [in the Southeast] want to have too many children. Esra s remark, perhaps unintentionally, implies that the women in the Southeast have control over their bodies and their fertilities, while Uğur's states that they simply have more babies as a fact, something immutable written within the body of the Kurdish woman. Thus, the performance of their ascribed biological destiny is deeply tied to their ethnicity and not merely to their gender. The comments by Esra and Uğur demonstrate the attitudes of some of these university students toward what Kurds, and particularly Kurdish women, represent to them: an intentional population creep on the part of an undesirable portion of the population. While Saraçoğlu's 2010 study explored the negative stereotypes of Kurds (such as benefits-scroungers), these speakers did not suggest those specific traits; rather what they expressed was the idea of a threatening, growing Kurdish population.

A Kurdish-Turkish dualism, however, does not adequately account for another shift between perceptions of gender within the scope of this discussion. As Kardam (2005) discussed the myth of Islamic-Western dualism and replaced it with more fluid dualities, here too can another dualism, an East-West dualism, be superimposed on the Kurdish-Turkish for the extension of the division between *us* and *them*. This is complicated by the fact that the eastern part of Turkey has a large but not exclusively Kurdish population. Elif explained in her interview that she was originally from the East and migrated as a child to the West, and she meaningfully pointed out to me that this was important by saying emphatically, You know? The East-West situation,

without identifying explicitly as Turkish or Kurdish. She continued by explaining that her father, having grown up in the East,

> has been brought up by their culture [which includes all the most important issues for gender, like] violence, *tore* [traditions], *namus* [honor], [the] whole kind of laws in Eastern Turkey, the unwritten laws of the family and the culture.

She linked the idea of the problematic gender issues of clans and tribes exclusively with the East and further separated herself from them by stressing the word *their* when discussing the culture. She expressed pride in her father for overcoming his Eastern upbringing by saying, When you judge him by his standards, he has developed himself a lot. Often encoded in this discussion of the East was the possible indirect reference to Kurds as well as perceptions of relations between women and men in the East. These relationships are understood, as seen in the comments of the students above, to exist within a separate patriarchal, tribal culture based on traditions where the head of the tribe will tell you what to do (Elif). This is a culture that is almost foreign to the way other people, who can think more modern (Mert), operate, people like the *us* implied by Uğur, Esra, Mert and Elif. The duality of East-West engulfs that of specific ethnic identities when discussing gender issues but remains a problematic paradigm for deeper understanding.

***Namus,* the State and Human Rights**

Kardam s dualisms (or binaries) can be used to approach the relationship between the State and human rights in Turkey as well, especially when examining the discourse of these students and their perceptions of the problems women specifically face. This dualism is best understood as regarding the role the State should take in contrast to the perceived reality. A major theme running through the interviews was the idea that the State was intended to play a significant role in protecting human rights, but in reality was often negligent or engaged in perpetuating the violations. This Perpetrator-Protector dualism was often

rooted in the historical and cultural specificity of the Turkish context.

The participants in the interviews often identified honor killings (*namus cinayeti*) as one of the major issues. *Namus*, loosely translated as *honor*, is explained by Ayşe Parla (2001) as a woman s purity [and] an icon of family honor (77). This understanding was echoed by several of the interview participants, including Sedef of the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project, who stated,

> it has to do with a girl is virgin until she is married or not, and that s what makes *namus* well, men s *namus* is their sister s or their mother s or their wife s virginity [it s] cleanness, cleaning according to Turkish culture.

Sedef went on to talk about how this concept was not her idea but rather an idea in Turkish culture and antithetical to human rights. Sedef, a student who has worked on gender issues for two years, represents someone who is deeply disillusioned with the promise of human rights to guarantee social justice locally, despite her committed involvement in women s human rights. She sees as well in her own culture, unlike the speakers of dualism above, that merely the existence of human rights cannot help those victimized by concepts like *namus* that she associates immediately with honor killings and rape. Her frankness in the discussion with the researcher became obvious when she lowered her voice, despite the privacy of the interview room, to explain how the State would not protect people and was often the perpetrator of violent crimes.

> In the 1980s, my father and mother were, like, communists [when the military coup happened] one of her [my mother s] friends, she was raped, and another was tortured [by the State] human rights doesn t exist.

Elif echoed this disillusionment with the State as protector and instead perceived the State as a frequent perpetrator of violence, as did Project Members Mert and Ecesu. Elif, when talking about the persistent

harassment she experiences as a woman in public in Turkey, explains that she, along with Turkish women in general, learned to

> shut down and ignore it you do not reply, or take him to the police because the police will also do the same. He will ask you what happened, and you would say he has verbally abused you. He will say there is nothing they can do. This has happened to me many times. The police does not offer me safety.

Elif is explaining that when reporting harassment, the police are either unwilling or unable to protect and, in fact, sometimes continue the harassment. As Kardam (2005) points out, all the gender-sensitive laws in the world will not help if the judges, the police and the court system are guided by a different set of norms" (30.) Mert also expressed his concern over the fact that the State, through its school system, perpetuates a culture of violence when he explained that teachers and students both engage in physical violence in public schools. Mert, who during primary school transferred from public to private and back to public school again, remarked on the fact that the school cultures differed radically between the private and public spheres.

> And you know, in Turkey, in the public schools, the teacher normally beat them. Yeah, mostly. But in private school, no matter what they do, they won t hit you. When we learned that, it was much more comfortable for me.

Mert also shared an experience from an earlier CIP project he had participated in that underscores the violence he associates with the public (State) school system. Mert had previously been a Member of a CIP project that worked with schoolchildren in lower socioeconomic areas of Istanbul. At his State school, he witnessed a student draw a knife on one of the other Volunteers. The teacher s response was to beat the student. Mert s perception of the public school system is one of violence and insecurity. Again, this perception is not just confined to members of the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project. Zeynep, a Sabancı University student who

volunteered in a CIP summer project, echoed this idea of the public schools operating within violent parameters, reporting that a discussion of rape among school students in a rural village involved the suggestion by the children that the victim, who was a student, should be suspended from school. The idea that the school, a public institution, should punish a rape victim was linked closely with the ideas of *namus*, and underlines the realization not just by *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* members but by Sabancı students overall that women live in an unprotected and even State-perpetrated condition of violence in Turkey. In Turkey, a man who has killed his sister in an honor killing can be given a reduced sentence if a judge accepts this tradition (Gündüz, 2004), thus ensuring that the State becomes complicit in gender-related violence.

Ecesu, a quiet, serious student majoring in Cultural Studies, also discussed this lack of security and protection in terms of violence against women, when she said,

> If a women commits adultery or even if she doesn t cheat but leaves that impression, she gets beaten even if she tries to get help from women's organizations ... nobody takes care of her. Her husband takes her back home. The women comes home and she is murdered.

Ecesu is expressing the concern that the woman, a victim of an honor killing, has no protection, neither from the State nor from organizations specifically created to help her because Turkey is a country which has abused this right so much. All these students are expressing a sense of betrayal--that while human rights should be supported and strengthened by the State, the reality is tragically different.

What Else Can We Do? Co-creating a Gender Project

When discussing the goal of the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project as understood by its members, utilizing a series of shifting dualisms of internally- and externally-focused social change can help to unpack the perspectives Turkish students bring to understanding the project s goal. The goal of *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* is, according to Sedef, to make sure that the Team Members know what gender means and understand its implications, and then make sure the whole campus

knows … in terms of how effective it will be, I don't know." Despite Sedef s disillusionment with human rights and her uncertainty about the efficacy of her project, her behavior in leading discussions in the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project suggests a commitment to fostering critical discussion and raising awareness on topics of gender discrimination and homophobia. Other Team Members interviewed verbalized how they saw the purpose and effectiveness of the project regarding gender and LGBT issues in different ways, including a realization that the goal dictates that the project focus on its members first and conflicting opinions on how effective this can be.

Ecesu gave her opinion on the project by saying, It s [Toplumsal Cinsiyet] a brave project We have to believe in we can change. What else can we do?" A first year student who had previously volunteered with Greenpeace, this project was Ecesu's first experience with CIP. In place of the *us-them* mentality of Uğur and Esra, where the problem lay with the Other women, Ecesu saw change as starting with the Team Members individually. Thus, Ecesu s concern over violence against women (such as honor killings) and homophobia in Turkey were not only externalized to problems that other people have, but were her problems as well. Mert, another Team Member in his first year, concurred, sharing that despite his expectation that *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* would have a broader impact perhaps even collaborating with LGBT organizations—he soon realized that the project had to transform its goal

> into just making ourselves aware of some things and breaking our prejudices [in the project] we are working with what kind of people … that's why the first week we started to talk about how we first have to break our prejudices.

Ecesu saw this first semester of the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project as something active, not passive, in that it tried to change people s (*our*) attitudes. Instead of associating negative traits such as intolerance with a specific *them*, she observed the spaces for change within the *us*. She saw *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* as an effective project with room for growth. In contrast, Davut, when asked what the project was about,

complained, We haven t done anything yet. He felt that the project needed to take a more active role to achieve real change. His frustration was apparent as he directly thereafter brought up an incident a few days earlier in which the police had beaten student protestors. Implicit was the idea that *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* should be out there dealing with real-world issues rather than engaging in the inactive, passive discussions of the project as it was currently being realized. Despite his impatience with the project, he thought that overall the CIP course was a positive experience and recognized the revised goal of educating themselves as critical. One member of the project, he reported, had proudly claimed to have beaten a gay man who had followed too closely behind him on a public street. The shocked silence I observed in this lesson was indicative of the realization that the individuals in the project were a truly diverse group who didn t all think the same (Davut).

Mert chose the project specifically because he was interested in LGBT issues, having many friends who were gay and often complained about having to be silent.

> I wanted a place where I could really talk about this [homophobia]--these things. I can t talk about them with my [straight] friends [My gay friends] told me that they weren t really able to talk about their daily issues with many people. They said, 'We are lucky that we find someone like you.

Like his friends, Mert was expressing a need for a safe place to talk about these issues. For him the opportunity to discuss these topics was rare, had to be created, and, in contrast to Davut, served an important purpose in and of itself. Mert thought the project was effective and successful in this way because he did feel secure enough to talk about his ideas. He expressed reservations, however, about how effective the project could be beyond this. Despite his enjoyment of the project and its discussions, he concluded the interview with the following comments:

> Well I don t think they are changing people s ideas. People who are open-minded are just getting together. People who are macho are

> still macho they were macho in high school and they are macho in university. They will be macho for the rest of their life. But people who can think about the--who can think more modern are just getting together.

In the words of Ecesu, Sedef, Davut and Mert a discourse of change can be traced, on the one hand focusing on external change: the intolerant and uneducated Other alongside the protest on the street. On the other hand, another, parallel discourse of change is also present. It s one that focuses on the *Us*, the internal; less ambitious, perhaps, more modest, but nevertheless a necessary point of departure, acknowledged by these students in the face of their frustration. This dualism of internal and external change was built primarily within a classroom space, a space that contains a wide range of perspectives on these topics, yet nevertheless allows a freedom of speech not often seen outside of it. In contrast to the general understanding of the protestors, women and gays (and Project Members themselves) as vulnerable, many of these students were empowered by this project s creation of a place for open and free discussion. The creation of this secure space for discussions about LGBT and gender issues is an irreplaceable part of a successful project. The realization of the limits and possibilities of the project help these students to continue creating the project together by forging safe spaces and by educating themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the troubled and shifting discourses that emerged during a study of social responsibility projects at Sabancı University in Turkey illuminate the concerns of these university students regarding gender, especially within but not exclusive to the conversations of students enrolled in a gender project. These discourses focused on perceptions of gender and ethnicity, State action or inaction regarding gender-related violence, and the possibility of social change.

Perceptions of gender and ethnicity remain a problematic theme throughout study of the students in this gender project. In spite of this, many students still struggle with what they know about the world, namely stereotypes and the ever-present Otherization and dualism

that mark their discourse. This manifests primarily in perceptions of gender within a Kurdish-Turkish and an East-West dualism. In both cases, the unknown or unfamiliar ethnicity or region is seen as backward, primitive, tribal, traditional, and a threat to the modern Western Turkish lifestyle. This understanding is described particularly in terms of the Kurdish or Eastern woman s fertility, as overpopulation is expressed as a growing danger. Although both Kurdish and Eastern women are talked about in similar terms and there is reason to believe the two identities are closely linked in the minds of students, it is important to note that they do not operate as direct substitutes. Rather, the students understand them in similar ways: as Others who trouble them greatly, creating a high degree of discomfort. Even those with connections to the East see advancement primarily in leaving behind its associated negative characteristics. These dualisms remain problematic as they do not fully explain how students navigate the intersection of ethnicity and gender, but do start to draw a much richer picture.

Beyond the perceptions of the relationship between gender and ethnicity lies the troubled discourse regarding the State, human rights, and the cultural concept of *namus*, or sexual honor. Among these students, the State is seen as a betrayer of trust, as violent and violator, either directly or through representatives such as educational institutions, the judicial system, or the police. Within a generally violent context of school, street, and home, vulnerable individuals such as women and children are seen to be those most grossly victimized by the State, which perpetrates or fails to prevent violence especially (though not solely) against women. Despite the advancements in Turkish law regarding domestic violence and women s rights, these students see a brutal gap between law and reality that impacts even themselves.

Finally, the students' troubled discourses reflected concerns regarding the ability of projects like these to effect social change in their community. These discourses demonstrated a conflict between the ambitious overarching goal of effecting broad social change and a more realistic understanding of the necessity of starting small by confronting personal biases and prejudices, exposing a dualism of external and internal change. This is an inversion of the idea of the

Other as receptacle of negative qualities, reflected back on students using a reflexive, introspective method. In the end, it was in the unexpected, unplanned creation of a safe space to discuss gender- and LGBT-related social issues that this project met the initially unexpressed needs of many of the students.

Further Research

The overall goal of the Civic Involvement Projects (CIP) course is to create a more aware, more socially responsible university student body. The *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* project component of CIP is an example of a student-led initiative that has created a space in which aspects of gender may be discussed and analyzed in order to understand the role society plays in shaping gender inequality and gendered violence. Topics have included gender roles, LGBT issues, women and ethnic minorities in Turkey, and the transfer of gender expectations through media and education. Because the Team Members raise the topics, the topics generally have more relevance to their lives than those found in traditional courses. Many students have lively debates in the classroo m, often expressing extreme positions, while others sit quietly listening. Despite continuing discrimination and inequalities faced by women and sexual minorities, the project and its members demonstrate a deeper complexity in the Turkish reality as understood by these university students. Further research can only expand the scope of this article. While the focus of this paper is on how students talk about the gender issues that form the core of the project, an understanding of both CIP in general and its specific projects would be enriched by following the project throughout the entire academic year. Furthermore, CIP s popularity in the media and imitations by other universities and even high schools suggest that a need exists for academic social responsibility initiatives. A national analysis of these courses at university and high school levels can gauge the pervasiveness of this movement and the congruity of the *Toplumsal Cinsiyet* members experiences with those of students at different levels of education across the country.

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Picturing 'Naked Life'[1]: Bodies at the Margins in the Photography of Parminder Sekhon

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[1] Agamben, 2000, p. 42-3. Giorgio Agamben and other philosophers such as Hannah Arendt use the term bare life, originally presented in his Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1998), to address issues of citizenship and biopolitics. "Bare life" (occasionally translated as "naked life) refers not only to one s physical body but to the individual as an entity separate from the state and stripped of that which constitutes one s sociopolitical selfhood. Agamben traces the concept to Aristotle and Greek conceptions of zoe and bios, terms used to designate individual existence from collectively experienced civic and political life (i.e. the political body). In employing the term, I am intentionally engaging Agamben though my chief interest is in Sekhon s photographs of naked subjects and the ways in which they lay bare (via literal nakedness) sociopolitical tensions, many of which also interested Agamben.

In *This Sex Which is Not One*, Belgian philosopher Luce Irigaray (1977) argues, we only touch each other naked. And…to find ourselves once again in that state, we have a lot to take off. So many representations, so many appearances separate us from each other that we have come to forget the feel of our own skin (p. 217-218). Irigaray s poetic observation precedes Parminder Sekhon s artistic career by nearly a decade, yet it is as though Irigaray s words were meant to describe Sekhon s photographs. Sekhon, a queer South Asian artist who lives and works in Britain, uses her photographic work to encapsulate such complexities of identity as those she herself embodies. In her *Urban Lives* series (1999-2002) [fig 1], Sekhon dismantles binaries—of gender, of space (private/public), of viewership (active viewer/passive subject). Her photographic subjects resist categorization, refusing to alienate others or be othered themselves. Yet her work does more than this. Sekhon s photographs raise crucial questions about the naked body as a medium for ethical intervention.

Before exploring the theoretical implications of her photographs, it is worthwhile to acknowledge Sekhon s background, which provides further insight into her artistry as activism. Sekhon is a self-taught photographer, though she identifies more as an activist than an artist, claiming in 2003, at least four years after her initial foray into photography, that her conception of herself as an artist was a recent development (Smyth, 2003, p.110). Sekhon s primary career has been in client services at Naz Project London (NPL), a long-standing non-profit devoted to sexual health awareness and support. The organization, which predominately serves London s South Asian communities, focuses on AIDS and HIV prevention and consultation (NPL, 2011). During her time at Naz, Sekhon, who is now Deputy Director, became involved in the organization's media campaigns and began taking photographs for the posters herself [fig 2]. Thus Sekhon's entrée into photography was through her work on anti-homophobia campaigns. That Sekhon is an artist-activist attuned to the power of visual messaging is evident in her borrowing of commercial advertising tactics, specifically the use of text and slogans evident in United Colors of Benetton ads as well as on mainstream movie posters [fig 2b], to foster queer visibility. This representational stratagem is manifest in Sekhon s *Urban Lives* photographic series, to which I now return.

"Naked without Shame"

There is controversy among scholars over the use of the naked body for feminist aims. Avant-garde filmmaker and cinematographer Peter Gidal laments, I do not see how [ ] there is any possibility of using the image of a naked woman [ ] other than in an absolutely sexist and politically repressive patriarchal way in this conjuncture" (Gidal in Wolff, 1990, p. 121). Cultural critic and theorist Janet Wolff expresses a similar wariness of using the female body for feminist ends when she writes about the arguably failed 1989 Sandycove, Dublin protest.[2] Wolff highlights the bare body's "pre-existing meanings, as sex object, as object of the male gaze," which she maintains can always prevail and reappropriate the body, despite the intentions of the woman herself (p. 121). While she initially acknowledges the dangers of body politics, Wolff ultimately affirms "that a feminist cultural politics of the body is a possibility, explaining, There is every reason, too, to propose the body as a privileged site of political intervention, precisely because it is the site of repression and possession (p. 122).

This paper engages this dialogue by asking if Sekhon s imaging of the female and/or queer body, either her own or that of her photographic subjects, can facilitate reclamation and empowerment of the unclothed body when for so long it has been objectified. In other words, is there potential for contestation via the naked female or queer body, particularly an unclothed woman or queer of color? Can we conceive of the naked figure in the absence of capitalist inscription, gender expectations, and art genre (i.e. the canonical female nude)? Can this nakedness as activist intervention prompt political and conceptual reformulations of selfhood and otherness?

As well-known feminist theorist Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) states, The work of the *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show

[2] On July 17, 1989, a group of women staged a protest against a male-dominated portion of the beach at Sandycove in Dublin. The well-known swimming hole, an inlet in the Sandycove harbor called The Forty Foot, was a haven for male beachgoers, who often swam naked there. As such the presence of women was dissuaded. In protest, a small group of women stormed the beach, removed their bathing suits, and swam nude or semi-nude in the harbor. The event, deemed an invasion by many sources, garnered media attention, notably from The Guardian, which included a photograph of a nearly nude female protestor being ogled at and heckled by the male bystanders on the beach. Wolff reads the photograph as emblematic of the potential failures of using the unclothed female body as means to liberatory ends.

in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended (p. 102, my emphasis). In order to transcend objectification and entrenched models of viewing, we must rethink identity (i.e. physical, cultural, and historical models of signification) and ultimately space (i.e. the body in space). [3] To do this we must remember the feel of our own skin (Irigaray, 1977, p. 217-218) and, as bell hooks (1998) eloquently maintains, we must re-encounter ourselves. I contend that Sekhon s photographs set the stage for this exchange with naked life.

Such a re-encountering of the female and queer self entails recognition of the invisibility of marginalized bodies. On this invisibility Irigaray (1977) writes,

> Women s bodies through their use, consumption, and circulation provide for the condition making social life and culture possible, although they remain an unknown *infrastructure* of the elaboration of that social life and culture. The production of women, signs, and commodities is always referred back to men [ ] The work force is thus always assumed to be masculine, and products are objects to be used, objects of transaction among men alone. (p. 171)

Irigaray illuminates the ways in which women and their bodies function as necessary but unrecognized entities in the fabric of daily life. It is this commodification, coding, and containment that renders the female and queer body foreign and unseen even to itself. Sekhon recognizes this disappearance or subsuming of the female and queer self and uses the hyper-visibility of her naked subjects to expose and challenge this process of codification. Sekhon's

[3] See Mieke Bal, The Politics of Citation, diacritics 21.1 (Spring 1991): 25-45. Bal uses the term "de-objectification" in conjunction with "de-distancing" (31) to argue that insight alone is not enough; we have to live through our part traumas again, not looking at them from a false distance but immersing ourselves in them." She observes "de-objectification" in a number of early twentieth-century colonial photographs and postcards. According to Bal, "de-objectification" occurs when there is "an exchange of looks" (26) and refusal of complicity on the part of the female subject, which complicates subject/viewer exchange. Recognizing the gaze as returned "makes room for differentiated viewing positions" and the possibility for recognizing the "tight solidarity between knowledge of the other and self-knowledge (43).

utilization of space and physical structures in her photographs (architectural framings, fences, wires, and street signage) reflects her acknowledgment of women and other marginalized peoples as an unknown infrastructure. Moreover, her use of actual infrastructural elements often dislocates and abstracts her urban settings, calling into question societal infrastructure and the ways in which we are socially composed and assembled.

In Sekhon s *Southall Market* self-portrait (1999) [fig 1], two figures, the artist and her elderly mother, stand side-by-side facing the camera. The prominent fence that separates the women from the market setting divides the scene at an awkward angle; as such, the figures are shot straight on, but the background is slightly oblique. Beyond the fence, we see the detritus of the day s exchange piles of boxes and trash on damp asphalt. An indiscernible sign hangs on the front of the central building. Just behind and to the right of the covered stalls, one can barely make out the rooftops and chimneys of the surrounding suburb. The photograph contains a rather deep field and focus, yet Sekhon s compression of space (i.e. the closeness of the figures and fence) obscures the background. What is noticeably absent from the background, vendors and customers, is glaringly, perhaps jarringly present in the foreground.

Ironically, Sekhon s mother forced her to frequent this market on Saturdays throughout her childhood. She recalls:

> My mother tried to persuade me to go [ ]
> I hated it and I tried to avoid the inevitable
> standoff each week. Those mothers lagging
> behind Stepford daughters, dragging trolleys
> all over Southall on the way to and from the
> market. I couldn t bear it. In the end she did
> stop asking but it was hard because I couldn t
> do the simplest of normal things that was
> required of me I must have been hinting at
> the way of things to come. (Smyth, 2003, p. 110)

Even at an early age, Sekhon recognized that her non-normative behavior failed to contribute to the fodder of the older women s gossip circle. Her comments reveal a female-centric system, yet it is one of internalized hegemony,

ironically perpetuating heteropatriarchy (see hooks, 1998, p. 73). As an adult and artist, Sekhon responds to her former feelings of exclusion, positioning herself outside that realm of commerce and conformity. She is simultaneously connected to her childhood neighborhood yet resistant to its stifling gender expectations. Just as Sekhon eventually refused to attend the market with her mother, causing a rupture in the habitual happenings of her family, the artist s nakedness also disrupts the idyllic domesticity and social harmony embodied in her use of the term Stepford daughters. [4] Sekhon s nakedness at this site of commerce and transaction thus demonstrates her rejection of the reinforced behavior and performance that frequenting the market often entails.

When asked about the conception of this photograph, Sekhon comments, For me it was about looking at the naked form in a non-pornographic context; it was also about looking at the naked form in an urban landscape. I wanted as much exposure, as it were, as much vulnerability, as much openness and transparency as I could possibly get (Whitworth, 2009). Sekhon s inclusion of infrastructural and architectural elements as well as urban debris, such as discarded boxes and other containers, invoke metaphors of the woman as receptacle. The fence, which converges behind Sekhon s body, and the bare buildings juxtaposed with her bare form create a perspicuous setting for her exposed body and her exposure of the ways in which space and behavioral expectations therein are inscribed on the body. Thus if the space that Sekhon inhabits (or chooses not to inhabit) codes her body, it is not with male-driven, capitalist exploitation but with the possibility of emancipation not *in spite of* but precisely *through* her body s evident exclusion.

Power at the Margins: A Space of One's Own

"If I speak of marginality, it is because, first of all, these movements [i.e. women s liberation] to some extent keep themselves deliberately apart from institutions and from the play of forces in power Outside already-exiting power

[4] Stepford wives (or in this case daughters) is an expression derived from Ira Levin s 1974 novel by the same name (there have been a number of movie adaptations as well). These stories, named for their Stepford, Connecticut setting, have evolved into a contemporary archetype of sorts, as satires and even horror story perversions of idyllic domesticity.

relations…This ‘position’ is explained by the difficulties women encounter when they try to make their voices heard in places already fixed within and by a society that has simultaneously used and excluded them This position can be understood, too, through women s need to constitute a place to be among themselves, in order to learn to formulate their desires, in the absence of overly immediate pressures and oppressions. (Irigaray, 1977, p. 127)

The question of how to incite change in perceptions, in politics, in power dynamics, from the outside in, from the margins in, or from the supposed bottom up is at the forefront of Sekhon s photographic aims.[5] Sekhon’s figures, easily recognizable as deviant for their unorthodox hair color, gender bending, or the sheer fact that they are unclothed, often appear alone and isolated. In *Untitled* (1999) [fig 3], Sekhon s ambiguously gendered subject is shot against a mainstream movie poster. The juxtaposition of the embracing heterosexual couple on the poster with the lone photographic subject on the right, smoking and as unaware of the poster as the close-eyed actors are of her/hir/him, creates a sense of separateness. In photographs such as *Southall Broadway* (1999) [fig 4], which will be discussed in detail below, this exposure and separation is tinged with vulnerability and could easily be read as disadvantageous. Thus Sekhon s photographs elicit fundamental questions regarding how individuals relegated to the outskirts of society, either physically, juridically, or conceptually, can use this exclusion to their advantage.

A useful concept for examining the transformative potential of Sekhon s photographs can be found in Giorgio Agamben s (2000) writings on camps. When Agamben writes on camps as communities unto themselves as spaces or states of exception, he has concentration camps and internments such as Abu Ghraib in mind. He observes, what comes to light in the camps is the principle according to which anything is possible. (p. 1, 40) We see the possibility of such lawless places of exception when atrocities of torture and

[5] I am uncomfortable with my own employment of terminology that suggests my collusion with hierarchical paradigms of space and power in which so-called marginalized populace are marginal, outside, near the bottom, and so on. However, I use these normative conceptions of power and hierarchical arrangements therein to explore the ways in which contestations such as Sekhon s can potentially alter those very systems and their hegemonic configurations.

human rights violations become the norm. Yet if read against the grain, Agamben s rather grim observations of extreme exclusion and othering also contain liberatory potential. As he explains,

> The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule […] One ought to reflect on the paradoxical status of the camp as space of exception: the camp is a piece of territory that is placed outside the normal juridical order; for all that, however, *it is not simply an external space […] what is being excluded in the camp is captured outside, that is, it is included by virtue of its very exclusion.* (p. 38-40, my emphasis)

Agamben s commentary is important when considering Sekhon s photographs and when rethinking marginality, a word he perhaps deliberately avoids. If, as I posited earlier, we are to rethink subject-object patterns of viewing, then it must begin with a rethinking of spatiality, more specifically a rethinking of bodies, in Sekhon s case, naked bodies, in space. A re-conceptualization of ethics and the success of activist happenings therein hinge on the emancipatory potential that Agamben makes room for and which Sekhon elucidates. By photographing her figures in highly public, often recognizable urban settings that she then compresses or abstracts, Sekhon interrogates space. Through her illumination of physical infrastructure, she exposes largely ignored elements of spatial composition (junctures, crevices, building joints, and seams) to call into question our assembling of selfhood. In her exposure of bare life, Sekhon reveals often-concealed dynamics and exchanges, what Agamben deems the hidden matrix and nomos of the political space in which we live (in What Is a Camp? p. 38, 7).

Bodies, Cities, and Urban Interventions

Metaphors of space and habitation predominate many discussions of identity formation, as is evident in the Anzaldúa, Irigaray, and Agamben quotations above. In *The Decolonial Imaginary*, Emma Pérez (1999) devises the phrases “third

space and interstitial moments of history to explain the position of a marginalized populace and its relation to history. She describes her scholarly approach as going outside [history] in order to come back in with different kinds of inquiries (p. xiii, xvi). Similarly, Sekhon uses her photography to document South Asian queer life in London going outside mainstream culture to archive culture without a history. Sekhon and her subjects not only physically occupy a third space, as they appear lone outsiders in metropolitan street-scapes, they also conceptually dwell in a third space inhabiting identities that are neither fixed, dichotomous, nor binary. In this tertiary space, Sekhon's queer sitters secure increased visibility through intentional exposure, a harbinger for this welcomed between-ness.

In a biological sense "interstitial" is defined as "situated within but not restricted to or characteristic of a particular organ or tissue. Interstitial stems from the Latin *interstitium* meaning both standing and a break or a gap (Merriam-Webster, 2009). This etymology will prove especially pertinent throughout this discussion. In Sekhon s photography, her subjects often stand before deserted markets, famous landmarks, and garish storefronts, yet they are positioned between these architectural spaces spaces that we perceive them to be separate from and the camera lens/viewer. It is from this liminal space, both outside and inside the city, both within systems of power (i.e. subjected to the gaze) and beyond them, that these seditious photographs of street-dwellers spur acts of critical intervention and collective resistance (hooks, 1998, p. 73).

Integral to Sekhon s ability to challenge subject-object paradigms of viewing and objectification is her juxtaposition of naked bodies in urban settings. While the nudity in Sekhon s photographs could potentially stand on its own as a break, rupture, or interventionist tactic, the cityscapes and architectural framings behind these figures are equally active and crucial to the effect and success of Sekhon's work. In photographs such as *Bricklane* (1999) [fig 5], nakedness and urbanity are inextricably linked. Here two men pose before a large brick building. The building and its windows comprise the background of the photograph, subsuming any sense of depth, horizon, or skyline, as Sekhon again flattens space. The yellow and white street lines that flank the male figures become abstract patterns, creating a nearly

symmetrical framework with the windows behind them. The striated background of bricks, pipes, and wires is mirrored in the gaps and lines between the cobblestone street. The interplay of black and white is evident in the men s caps and the adjacent window. The sparseness of the scene is especially striking the glare on the windows that renders them blank, the empty backstreet, the lack of signage and signs of life. Our focus is thus forced on the figures, who appear as blank as their surroundings. The men's bare feet and the rawness of flesh on stone create both a sense of unity with and separateness from the urban space. Sekhon confirmed in an interview that she was interested in how disconnected or connected you might be to a landscape that you ve grown up in and that she "wanted that juxtaposition [of flesh and city setting] because ironically those were places she also felt the safest (Whitworth, 2009). This contrast of skin and concrete, an element we see in nearly all of Sekhon s photographs, serves as a literal reminder of this physical and discursive exposure of naked life.

Sekhon often incorporates spaces personal to her subjects, environs familiar to her, such as Southall Market, or iconographic and therefore loaded settings like the Hoover building, which I will return to below. Unlike her photographs of Club Kali, an active and well-known queer South Asian nightclub where her drag sitters play up their queerness for the camera [figs 6 & 7], in this *Urban Lives* series of nude figures in public spaces, it is as if she queers space and our conceptions of people and place. Art critic Raman Mundair (2003) writes that, in Sekhon s work, the South Asian Queer exists in an urban space where creative play can subvert representation (p. 7). Interestingly, in her *Urban Lives* series, Sekhon s subversive tactics are found not in photographic manipulation or shock-and-awe tactics but in the form of realism reminiscent of snapshot photography. Sekhon's figures are portrayed realistically, even unflatteringly, challenging sexist ideals about the mythic female nude. We note the crouched woman's flesh that bunches on her side in *Southall Broadway* (1999) [fig 4] and the awkward camera angle from which we view the woman in *Hoover Building, Perivale* (2002) [fig 8].

Yet Sekhon s work goes beyond subverting ideal body types. She often photographs the exposed bodies of her

sitters amidst capitalist imagery. While the artist claimed in a 2009 interview that these capitalist undertones were incidental, it is remarkable that the majority of her images take place in commercial settings from cash-and-carry shops to open-air markets. In *Hoover Building, Perivale* (2002) [fig 8], a woman appears in front of London's well-known Hoover building located in the suburb of Perivale, Middlesex. The Art Deco building, originally constructed by Wallis, Gilbert and Partners in 1932, housed offices and later a factory for the Hoover vacuum company. During World War II, the site manufactured electrical parts. In the 1980s, the complex was purchased and restored by the Tesco supermarket chain (Hoover Building, 2008). Sekhon s depiction of this historical structure creates a symbolic context that evokes normative expectations of domesticity (Hoover vacuums) and commercialism (Tesco supermarkets), as well as violence and consumerism (World War II contributions). The gold characters on what appears to be the building s main entrance visually rhyme with the woman s jewelry. This ornamentation, both on the building and her body, emphasizes the figure's lack of clothing. Her body language—crossed arms, firm stance, and a reticent facial expression suggest her awareness of being viewed and seeming discomfort therewith. This mutual recognition between viewer and viewed is an example of what Bal (1991) termed "de-objectification," as Sekhon's figure is not a passive subject who looks away to give the voyeur more license to look.

A comparison of the two photographs in this particular series reveals an even deeper level of commercial and corporeal interplay. Through her characteristic compression of space, Sekhon transforms a figure in space into a disjunct sign or "interface," to borrow from Elizabeth Grosz (1995, p. 108). This two-way linkage or exchange results in interplay between the figure and her backdrop, as the flattened composition dislocates all sense of spatial depth and separateness. It s as if the red lines of the building and the overhang which falls right at her shoulders are as much a part of her body as the jewelry she wears. As Mundair (2003) argues, Many of [Sekhon s] images carry strong cultural motifs, iconography and symbols, often represented via clothing, makeup and jewelry. Such things are encoded onto the skin, juxtaposed against an urban landscape (p. 7). Yet in Sekhon s photographs this coding or inscription

is obscure. Grosz (1995) argues that the body "becomes a human body only through mediation from others, from one s surrounding and that its inscription by a set of socially coded meanings and significances (both for the subject and for others), makes the body a meaningful, readable, depth entity (p. 104). In Sekhon s photographs, however, bodies are not easily readable entities.

In *Southall Broadway* (1999) [fig 4], Sekhon highlights signifiers of identity (jewelry, make up, clothing, faint tan lines, even other individuals) to illuminate layers of inscription and our investment in using these markers to maintain perceived difference. Unlike many of Sekhon's frontal figures, the woman in this image crouches on the curb and grabs her ankle. Like the standing woman in front of the Hoover building and the men in *Bricklane*, the figures' flesh contrasts with the grey concrete, which seems an inhospitable setting for these exposed beings. Her crouching position does not appear particularly empowered, but perhaps that is the point. Her pose and obliviousness to the voyeur's gaze render her easy to view, yet the backdrop screaming sale! creates an uncomfortable correlation with doing so. In fact, the signage, which protrudes from her head and eye level, seems to function like an overt caption. The red of the window sale sign and the shop awnings is echoed in her red lipstick. Interestingly, the only prevalent color in the photograph stems from the woman s make up and nail polish and the commodities for sale behind her. Here again corporeality and consumerism collide, as we sense that these products and sales pitches are visually manifesting on the woman s body. Yet while these commercial forces may manifest on the skin, they never fully overtake Sekhon's figures. Sekhon demonstrates that while the body is inscribed--by capitalism, sociocultural expectations, history, even familial obligations the body can also resist containment and inscription.

In *Southhall Broadway*, the viewer s potential discomfort with this exposure and excess of flesh is eased by the presence of a garment, yet the woman does not cover herself with her hands nor does she reach for the discarded garb. The latter implies that she chose to disrobe and is in control of her own exposure. Significantly, it is not the woman who confronts the viewer. While her head faces forward, she seems unaware of us and the passers-by in the background. Thus in lieu of the figure confronting the camera,

it is the commercial context that complicate our viewing; this is especially ironic considering commercial aims to visually appeal to and entice potential consumers. These urban settings activate the photographed individuals, whose unclothed state perpetuates a sense of simultaneous exposure and empowerment, or empowerment *through* exposure.

Integral to this transgressive potential is exchange exchange between the figures and their surroundings, between Sekhon and her subjects, between these figures and the viewer, and between the figures within the frame. As such, it seems especially significant that the majority of Sekhon s *Urban Lives* photographs take place in city streets, places of constant traffic, transaction, and negotiation. In *Cat and Steve, 2002* [fig 9], a two-photograph pairing or pendant piece, the initially clothed figure on the viewer's left is unclothed in the following image, while the figure on the right undergoes that same transformation in reverse, imbuing the series with a sense of animation. This interplay of bare and clothed echoes throughout the scene; for example, the figure on the left's turtleneck renders his upper body and arms fully clothed, yet his exposed midriff creates an awkward juxtaposition that enhances a sense of exposure. The man on the right, sporting vibrantly dyed hair and goatee, creates a similarly jarring contrast with his pale white skin, which also differs from the other figure's olive-toned complexion. The right figure's absence of facial and pubic hair again serves as a visual foil to the left figure's abundance of body hair. The severe part of the left individual s hair and shave marks, which reflect an absence of hair, contrast or are visually transposed to the figure's face through his faint moustache. While the left figure wears no jewelry, save a large silver belt buckle, the figure on the right has a number of piercings. These and his necklaces are far more noticeable when the man is nude, and stand out further because of the adjacent figure. As such, Sekhon invites us to see how clothing changes our reading of the figures' identities and their own self-presentations. Again she draws attention to perceived difference and identity markers; here, however, Sekhon does so through dynamic interplay between her subjects.

In *Space, Time, & Perversion*, Elizabeth Grosz (1995) maintains, If bodies are to be reconceived, not only must

their matter and form be rethought, but so too must their environment and spatio-temporal location (p. 84). Similarly, Irigaray asserts, In order to make it possible to think through and live [sexual] difference, we must consider the whole problematic of space and time The transition to a new age requires a change in our perception and conception of space-time, the inhabiting of places and of containers, or envelopes of identity" (Grosz, 1995, p. 121). In *Cat and Steve*, the figures' environ accentuates the exchange and fluidity we witness in the photographs. The square bricks, black pipes, second-story metal railing, wooden lattice, blue door, windows, light fixtures, and even the yellow clothes line create an abstract geometric patterning, as Sekhon once again condenses the background. We have no sense of the building's size or its roofline. While the clothes on the line and the colored objects within the lattice suggest that this is an inhabited space, the figures before us seem to have transcended these containers or envelopes of identity. Though their bodies are framed by piping and guardrails, they appear beyond containment, as their clothing swap and visual interplay suggest. Furthermore, the pipes, drain (in the left photograph), and linear patterns of the intersecting and often parallel shapes actually further activate the scene, as the figures are not behind, under, or within these boundaries. Just as Grosz perceives the city as a a point of transit, a site for chaotic, deregulated, and unregulatable flows" (p. 107), Sekhon employs urban settings in her photographs to show that the city can also be a site for the fluidity of identity, a haven for hybridity and in-betweenness.[6]

In *Two Black Girls, 1999* [fig 10] and *Untitled, 1999* [fig 11], we do not see the exposed wires, pipes, or scaffolding of many of Sekhon s street scenes; we do, however, encounter spaces whose interface with the figures who

[6] Grosz (1995) conceives of the exchanges between bodies and space as flows and interchanges. While she perceives the body as constituted by a confluence of meaning and experience, both self and other-imposed, she similarly sees the city as a relational amalgam, a complex and interactive network that links together disparate social activities, processes, relations, with a number of architectural, geographical, civic, and public relations to create a semi-permanent but ever-changing built environment or milieu (p. 107). What Grosz describes is not merely a physical environ always under construction; in her acknowledgment of the socioeconomic, cultural, and political matrix of daily life (note the connections to Agamben here), she also describes community under construction.

inhabit them furthers more fluid conceptions of identity. In *Two Black Girls*, two women pose arm in arm on an upholstered bench. While Sekhon is obviously critiquing the limitations of language when it comes to encapsulating identity the women s contrasting skin colors reveal the variations that such titles can contain she also continues her use of urban landscapes to elucidate such linguistic shortcomings. In *Two Black Girls*, the dark/light contrasts are accentuated by the women s clothing: one wears black boots, the other tan loafers; one wears dark grey pants, the other light; one wears a white print shirt, the other a solid black parka. Even the seat below them contains a geometric patterning of dark and light-toned bands and lines. This visual interplay, which we see throughout Sekhon s oeuvre, is further fueled by the setting. Behind the seated women are two doors; the dark-skinned woman is framed by the black door and her companion sits before white. In this photograph, as in numerous others by Sekhon, seams, joints, and in this case, bolts, are not hidden or obscured. Sekhon s inclusion of architectural fixtures, the metal chair leg, bolts, and concrete below the women, suggests that while these devices are seemingly static, the figures that they support are not.

Similarly, in *Untitled, 1999* [fig 11] two ambiguously gendered individuals pose under the heading Gentleman, an ostensible jab at restrictive and dimorphous gender norms. Sekhon s play with text, titles, and labels is furthered by the right figure's Superman t-shirt. Like a tattoo, the logo functions as an ironic inscription not unlike the bathroom label above. As in *Two Black Girls*, the figures at once contrast and complement one another. The figure in the navy suit has flat hair, while the other figure has spiky hair. The figure on the right wears sunglasses while we clearly see the whites of the left figure's eyes. Both figures twist their legs as they lean on one leg, but each advances the opposite appendage. The figure's semblances are as apparent as their differences: both left hands are tucked or fisted, both figures are in relaxed poses, and both wear navy. Sekhon s choice of a black and white, tiled stairwell, not unlike the black and white doorways in *Two Black Girls*, seems a symbolic setting for this shot, as this classic color binary is the backdrop for Sekhon s challenging of racial and gender binaries. The figures in both shots are separate yet together. There are palpable disjunctions, as neither the dark-skinned woman in *Two Black Girls* nor the

figure in sunglasses face the camera (the latter does in premise, but we cannot see the figure's eyes); yet the figures and the viewer engaging the photographs remain connected, social network[s] linked to other bodies and objects" (Grosz, 1995, p. 104). Thus instead of reductive and divisive subcategories such as East/West, Public/Private, Gay/Straight, or Female/Male, Sekhon s photographs advocate and conceptualize disarticulated linkages, East-West, Public-Private, Gay-Straight, and Male-Female, an acknowledgment of all that lies in between and its potential to subvert such dichotomous and problematic pairings.

Seeing the Other in Ourselves;
Seeing Ourselves in the Other

"'She is indefinitely other in herself." (Irigaray, 1977, p. 28)

Art theorist and Irigaray scholar Hilary Robinson (1995) responds to Irigaray s thought-provoking statement above by asking: who is she? what is other? where is self? (p. 138). These questions pervade Sekhon s portraits, especially her most disorienting and enigmatic self-portrait, *Old Southall Broadway, 1999* [fig 12]. Sekhon again poses nude in a commercial context, as she did in her *Southall Broadway* self-portrait with her mother. *Old Southall Broadway*, a three-part series, places the artist in the center flanked by minimized repetitions of another image, a separate photograph of Sekhon s nude body against a storefront.

In the central shot [fig 12b.], the background is an eerie, almost gallows-like setting of broken black rope, wooden boards, and a tattered white bag. As in her *Southall Market* photograph, Sekhon makes no effort to hide the accrual of this presumably abandoned loading dock. A damp, flattened cardboard box tops the platform in the center of the shot while an intact box sits to Sekhon s right. In a departure from her usual positioning of her portrait figures, here Sekhon looks away as if startled in the central shot. Her nipple ring serves as the focal point of the composition, as if to invite exoticism and sensuality, yet this is not an aesthetically pleasing backdrop for the exposed body.

In this photograph, as in many of Sekhon s works, the setting does more than deter the voyeuristic gaze. Grosz

(1995) claims that the city is the site for the body s cultural saturation, its takeover and transformation by images, representational systems, the mass media, and the arts the place where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed. She further explains, In turn, the body (as cultural product) transforms, reinscribes the urban landscape according to its changing (demographic) needs *a hinge between* the population and the individual, the body, its distribution, habits, alignments, pleasures, norms, and ideals (p. 108-109, my emphasis). Sekhon s half-turned body indeed operates like a hinge, as she swivels behind her, encouraging our eyes to follow hers into the maze of wooden boards. Here we see what appears to be new construction. The light-colored wood contrasts with the darker, seemingly damp boards in the foreground. Her body correlates with the tan-colored box to her right. The new wood and Sekhon herself appear to be the only dry entities in the shot. Read conceptually and in light of Grosz's commentary above, the space and Sekhon s presence are even more symbolically loaded.

The intact cardboard box and wooden frames, as discussed above in *Southall Market*, are containers, connoting associations of the female body as a repository. Yet Sekhon intentionally positions herself between these flattened, damp, and torn boxes (one detached box flap is between us and the artist and the larger, still intact box is slightly behind her). It s as if Sekhon is showing us literally what her photographs aim to accomplish conceptually: to interrogate identify formation through deconstruction and reformation of bodies in space. The correlation between Sekhon s jewelry (nipple ring and single bracelet) and the metal bolts in the wood around her again illustrate this point. Here Sekhon is physically naked but also naked as a pre-symbolic being, absent of and thus free from the overt capitalist inscription of the flanking storefront images. In the side photographs, however, the surrounding shops shadows literally overtake Sekhon s diminutive body. By incorporating the mechanical facets of her environ in the central photograph, Sekhon employs the city and its unseen dimensions to draw attention to the construction of space as a means to question the constructed-ness of identity.

While Sekhon renders the body exposed and seemingly all the more accessible and vulnerable to outside gazes,

she complicates that viewing, making visibility an act of empowerment and subversion rather than further grounds for isolation. Her work demands and encourages new modes of viewing, which entails a consideration of how [the city] affects the way the subject sees others" (Grosz, 1995, p. 108-109). In her portrayal of bare life, Sekhon depicts naked beings whose exposure exposes the mechanics of how we form identity. She thus reveals a pedagogy of emancipation one of spatiality, ethics, aesthetics, and politics. In her querying of our consciousness, she highlights the potential for visual culture and the arts to provoke, embody, and illustrate what Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) perceives as a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other" (p. 103). In fulfilling her goal that her photographs serve as images people can connect to, (Whitworth, 2009) Sekhon s photographs facilitate exchange and in doing so, challenge normative perceptions of not only the Other but the spaces between us. Sekhon demonstrates that margins can be a place of empowerment and when moved to the center, they can promote transformation. Sekhon s photographs ultimately reveal more than these interstitial, third spaces and the naked life therein. She also exposes us.

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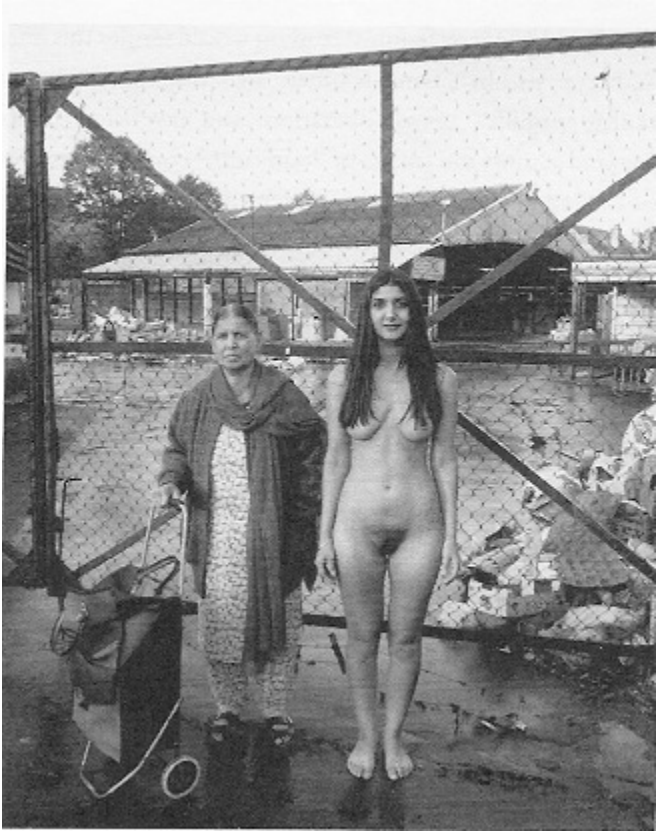

Figure 1
Parminder Sekhon, *Southall Market [self-portrait]*, 1999.

*Photographs reproduced with permission of the artist.

Figure 2
Sekhon, *Naz Anti-homophobia Poster Campaign,*
(date unknown)

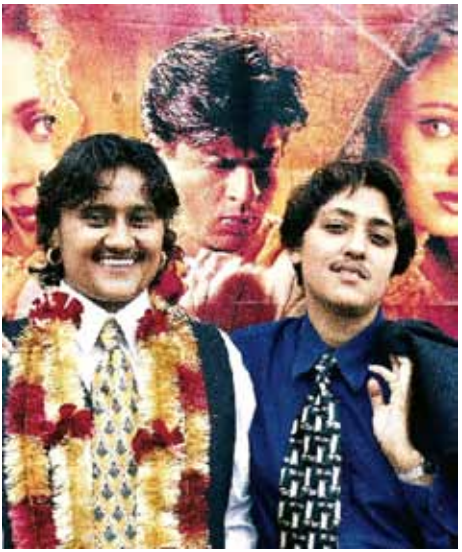

Figure 2b
Sekhon, *Untitled*, 2000

Figure 3
Untitled, 1999

Figure 4
Sekhon, *Southall, Broadway*, 2002

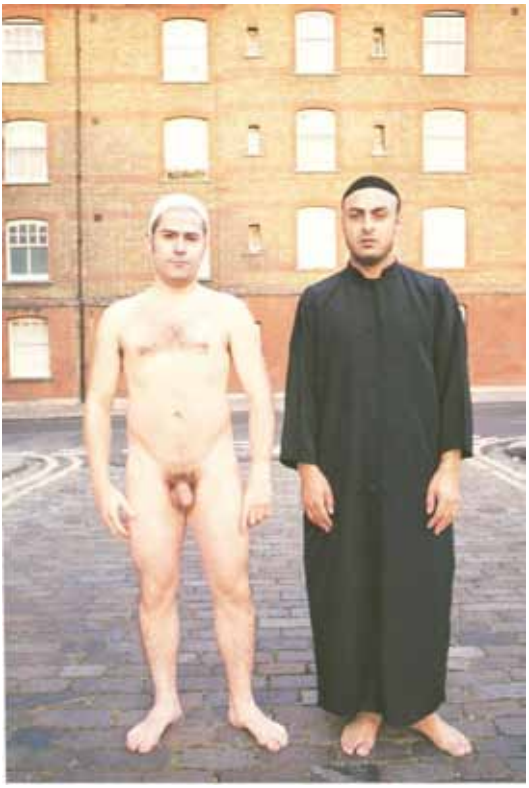

Figure 5
Sekhon, *Bricklane*, 1999

Figure 6
Sekhon, *Rani*, 2000

Figure 7
Sekhon, *Supermodel*, 1997

Fig 8
Sekhon, *Hoover Building, Perivale*, 2002.

Fig 9
Sekhon, *Cat and Steve*, 2002

Fig 10
Sekhon, *Two Black Girls*, 1999

Fig 11
Untitled, 1999.

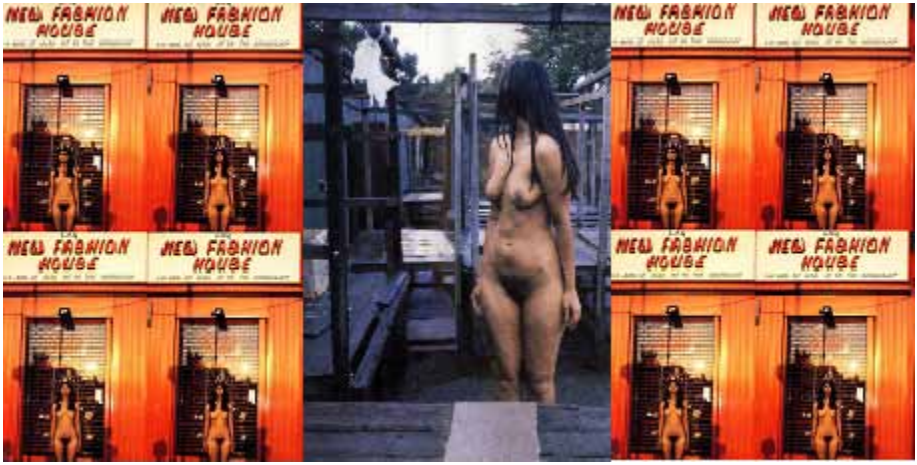

Fig 12
Old Southall Broadway, 1999.

Africa Stone: Challenge in the World's Strongest Man Competition

Chanel Clarke
Michener Center for Writers, The University of Texas at Austin

At it again: scooping up the motherland
to score and prove your point,
you shuffle forward with the shapes
of Nigeria and Libya pressed to the chest,
weighing you down, as the gold coast
juts out over the snug curve
of your forearms, each one thirteen inches
around, covered in brief tangles
of matted dirty-blonde hair.

I ain t mad at you: Africa is heavy
and to hold it in your arms, desperate,
for seventy five seconds, Canadian
white skin reddened by the strain,
before you finally drop the damn
stone on your foot and collapse

I mean it. I m impressed.

You re not the world s strongest man,
but you tried.

In your free time, you enjoy reading,
the personal profile says.

So read a funny newspaper headline
to a lover who thinks black people
smell like soup and complains
that this ruins soup for her
if she thinks about it too much.

Book Reviews

Gender Circuits: Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age
by Eve Shapiro
London, UK: Routledge, 2010
228 pages
ISBN 978-0-415-99696-9

Reviewed by M. Catherine Coleman
The University of Texas at Austin

Gender Circuits is an accessible and concise sociological history of the relationship between gender, sexuality, and technology in Western culture. Shapiro constructs a historical narrative that commences with sexual classification in ancient and early modern science and medicine and transitions into discussions of technologies of gender representation ranging from clothing, undergarments and cosmetics to the increasing occurrence of surgical and hormonal interventions into sexuality in the twentieth century. Pertinent case studies on gender performance troupes, a history of masculinity and tattooing, the nineteenth century controversy over bloomers and the expanding role of women in society, transgender treatments, and online activism are interspersed throughout.

Shapiro assumes little or no prior knowledge of groundbreaking events, trends, or ongoing debates in information technologies, biotechnologies or gender studies. Definitions of a variety of important terms and concepts for the critical study of technology and gender are offset and used in context. Shapiro s sociological analysis resists the celebratory or utopian technological progressivism found in a number of previous studies of technology and culture. While contemporary technologies frequently challenge unfounded binary social constructions of gender and insufficient either/or conceptions of biological sexuality, Shapiro insists that they are not innately liberating. Technologies allow for progressive possibilities (which are not unlimited), but they may also be used to reinforce oppression.

Shapiro commences with an introduction to the

emergence of individualism during the enlightenment and an overview of classificatory schemes of sexuality in ancient and early modern science and medicine. The social scripts for gender that structured male and female categories have been challenged and shifted since their formulation through non-normative performances of gender and the development of related medical procedures affecting the gender and sexual identification of intersex, transgender, transsexual, and cisgender persons. The term cisgender is vital to Shapiro s analysis, as it disrupts assumptions regarding the normalcy of matching gender behaviors and sexual identity. The cisgender/transgender framework demonstrates that gender and sexuality distinctions are unstable and blurry, as the scientific categories upon which these distinctions are founded are dominant ontologies and are not always valid. For Shapiro, the social, legal and medical histories of gender and sexuality are intimately related to colonialism, which established labels and sanctioned reactions to persons resisting categorization. Shapiro presents aberrant gender identification or intersexuality prior to the development of technologies for altering sex in the twentieth century as social identification issues related to dress and behavior. By the end of the twentieth century, however, Shapiro writes that transsexualism had been pathologized and added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1980 as Gender Identity Disorder (GID). In light of Shapiro s discussion of widespread resistance to medical gatekeeping among transsexuals, the persistence of GID diagnosis or its alteration to gender incongruence in the DSM-V as debated in a 2010 draft is indicative of the need for continued conversation between activists and the medical community.

Shapiro then focuses on how contemporary notions of gender and sexuality have carried over into social and information technologies including virtual worlds and online forums and resources. Shapiro s argument against overly optimistic technological progressivism emerges in full form as she insists that online interaction cannot be idealized as egalitarian or as being unmediated by the structural constraints and inequalities of the embodied world. Drawing on recent work by Robbie Cooper, Nick Yee and Jeremy Bailenson, and Marissa Ashkenaz on online personas and avatars, Shapiro points out that although online environments do provide a forum for identity work, identifications

aligning with hegemonic norms are often the most convenient options and the only choices rewarded with acceptance. Diversity of body size and race is woefully restricted in otherwise visually rich virtual worlds like Second Life and, when attempted (whether for the purposes of verisimilitude, desire, identity tourism or critical disruption) performances of diversity are often met with harassment or dismissal. Shapiro does highlight the vital function of supportive online communities in aiding individuals reconsidering gender and sexuality or altering their own identity as well as the opportunities for real world activism and organization presented by the development and growth of online communities.

The final chapters focus on the effects of somatechnics or biomedical technologies on embodied sexuality and gender performance. Shapiro begins with discussions of plastic surgery, gastric bypass, steroid use, hair growth aids and transplants, and sexual enhancements as well as disembodied image manipulation technologies. Shapiro expands her discussion of medical procedures for the alteration or exaggeration of meaningful traits by considering procedures like blepharoplasty or double eyelid surgery, which is being increasingly pursued by Asian women in North America in order to fit normative white beauty standards. Shapiro juxtaposes external interventions with internal hormonal treatments ranging from birth control to synthetic hormones and blockers before concluding with a discussion of how transsexual body work and intersexual acceptance have become more acceptable through efforts to re-write gender scripts in popular culture and work in sexuality and gender studies. Shapiro tempers these claims with a reminder of the persistence of physical violence and institutional resistance.

Gender Circuits is a far-reaching and yet readily accessible history focused on the present and oriented towards the future. Shapiro recaps a range of important scholarship in the sociology of gender and sexuality and cultural studies of technology over the last thirty years including the work of Donna Haraway, Bernice Hausman, Anne Balsamo, Leslie Feinberg, and Lisa Nakamura. Shapiro also references literature and historical moments that might be less familiar to readers new to gender and sexuality studies like *Self: A Study in Endocrinology and Ethics* (1946) by Michael Dillon, the first female-to-male person on record, who legally

changed his gender in 1944. *Gender Circuits* would be ideal for an introductory gender studies course focusing on contemporary issues or a course or unit on technology and culture. Shapiro s openness to the possibilities of technological innovation to shape individual identity and culture is productive, as is her refusal to fall back upon an uncomplicatedly optimistic technological progressivism.

Gender and Decolonization in the Congo: The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba
by Karen Bouwer
New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010
262 pages
ISBN: 0-230-61557-0

Reviewed by Tosin Abiodun
The University of Texas at Austin

In the 1960s the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) emerged as a political hot spot in Africa. As historical records reveal, the transition from decades of Belgian colonial brutality and paternalism to independence did not go smoothly. That being said, there is a tendency on the part of scholars, especially those who write about the process of decolonization in the DRC, to neglect the question of gender. Political scientists, for instance, are apt to focus on the rise of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviets and its impact on Congolese nationalism. Nationalist historians tend to focus on the activities of male nationalists who wrestled for political power without highlighting the contributions of female nationalists. Much scholarship on the DRC shows enthusiasm for resolving puzzles arising from a perennial question: who assassinated Patrice Lumumba?

Gender and Decolonization in the Congo departs markedly from the limited scope of most traditional accounts in that it utilizes a gendered analytical framework. It successfully delivers on its author s stated goals: first, it transcends conventional wisdom by challenging androcentric (male-centered) interpretations of the process of decolonization in the DRC, and second, it brings awareness to Congolese women s active agency in politics. The study goes

a long way towards presenting the first truly groundbreaking investigation of women s political participation in the DRC, a significant subject largely ignored by scholars.

It is possible that some scholars will take issue with the manner in which Karen Bouwer introduces her subject (Congolese women). The study situates Congolese women in both the colonial and post-colonial context while using Lumumba s life and representations of his legacies as a point of departure. Bouwer persuasively puts the potential doubt to rest, however, by emphasizing that previous and contemporary works focusing on Lumumba s legacies in particular and Congolese nationalism in general gives credence to the masculinist bias. This dominant discourse presumes gender neutrality, highlights the contributions of men and largely obscures the oppression and struggles of women.

In framing a gendered analysis, Bouwer manipulates a wide (though not unfamiliar) variety of evidence very skillfully, and writes in a lucid and unadorned manner. Some of the historical materials consulted include Lumumba s writings and speeches, especially those covering the period from 1946 to 1960; literary works (for instance, Aime Cesaire s *A Season in the Congo*); cinematic works focusing on Lumumba and the process decolonization in the Congo including Raoul Peck s *Death of a Prophet*, *Sometimes in April*, and *Lumumba*; and two Congolese women (Andree Blouin and Leonie Abo) life histories. It is clear that Bouwer, a learned literary scholar and film critic, puts her best skill forward with her critical assessment of cinematic and literary works dealing with the subject of decolonization in the DRC. One area in which the author falls short, however, relates to her use of oral evidence. Interviews conducted with prominent Congolese women activists such as Madame Pauline Opango Lumumba, Leonie Abo and Juliana Lumumba were sometimes too focused on the author s interest and interpretative needs. This constricted approach restricts the voices of these women in the text.

The structure of the exposition follows an unconventional layout. The seven chapters are topically organized, distinct in terms of both the materials analyzed and their approach to questions on gender. If one unifying theme emerges from the chapters, it is that intellectual constructions reflecting on the process of decolonization in the DRC often exclude the agency of Congolese women. *Gender and*

Decolonization in the Congo is richly documented and provides a useful index, an impressive bibliography, a dependable section of notes and rare photographs of Congolese female activists. A reader seeking a chronological approach may easily be put off by this study. Nevertheless, Bouwer is careful to sketch out a historical time-line guide that covers Congolese history from 1908 to 2002 for the benefit of non-specialists. The book starts with a powerful introduction, which contains an anecdote that underscores a central point of the book: the marginalization of women in the public sphere. In addition, the introductory note raises several salient questions, which were later addressed in the study: where do Congolese women fit in the narrative on decolonization? What new ideas of masculinity and femininity were generated by nationalists during the struggle for independence? Was masculinist bias upheld in later depictions of Lumumba s legacies and the process of decolonization in the Congo? What were the consequences of the masculism of nationalist discourse for women in the colonial and post-colonial era?

The first two chapters offer interesting information on the harsh conditions Congolese women faced under the oppressive rule of King Leopold. What is more, the chapters highlight ideologies and strategies used to deny Congolese women access to elite institutions during the colonial period. Chapter one investigates Lumumba s speeches and writings in order to ascertain how the martyred leader made sense of women s status and issues of gender. Here, Bouwer highlights the masculine bias and contradictions inherent in Lumumba s writings. Lumumba, for instance, advocated for educational opportunities for girls and boys yet he accepted ideals of female domesticity ideals propagated by members of the elite class (evolue) and Belgian authorities–which confined women to the home/domestic front. Chapter three raises interesting debates on gender struggles in the domestic realm through careful analysis of Lumumba s personal relationships with his wives, concubines and female activists. This section demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that Lumumba found it difficult to practice at home what he preached in public.

The most interesting chapters of the book are those which deal with women s political participation in the Congo. In chapter four, the life history of Andree Blouin becomes a focal point for establishing the premise that women

exploded dominant models of feminine subordination by taking active part in nationalist politics. Chapter Five further reveals that Congolese women asserted their agency in different guerilla formations and secessionist groups that emerged in the 1960s. The interesting profile of women such as Leonie Abo, Martine Mandinga, and Madeleine Mayimbi testifies to the high level of women s involvement in politics. The contributions of different women's organizations such as the Union of Democratic Women of Congo and Femmes de Allaince des Bakongo (FABAKO) also received adequate attention in the text.

Bouwer s study should stimulate some critical discussions on the politics of memory and remembering. Chapter five explores the representation of Lumumba's legacies and the question of gender in Aime Cesaire s literary work. Chapter six and seven highlights, although in a sympathetic and less critical way, the masculinist bias that informs the representations of women in Raoul Peck s cinematic works. Bouwer makes it clear that Pauline Opango Lumumba faults Peck's film *Lumumba* on the ground that it supports the dominant version of history, which labels her as the one directly responsible for Lumumba s death. In addition, the author brings into sharp focus the role of women as preservers of historical memory: we learn about efforts on the part of Leonie Abo to preserve the memory of the slain revolutionary, Pierre Mulele. We also learn about Justine M'poyo's effort to preserve Joseph Kasavubu's memory.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of this study is that it offers a promising and unfamiliar approach into the subject of decolonization in the DRC. Scholars interested in Haitian migration to the DRC will find this study to be an invaluable guide. Bauwer s work does have limitations; although well written, engaging and well researched, the study is slightly impaired by the author s heavy reliance on secondary materials and inability to engage critically with contemporary masculinist representations of Congolese women by the Western media. Nevertheless, *Decolonization in the Congo* is a serious work of academic scholarship, able to stir the minds of specialists in the field of gender studies, history, politics, diaspora studies, development studies and literary studies. The author reminds us that Congolese women played a huge role in the decolonization process, and that

they continue to play an important role in DRC politics today.

Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth about Guilty Pleasure TV
by Jennifer L. Pozner
Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2010
392 pages
ISBN: 1-580-05265-7

Reviewed by Virgina Hernandez
The University of Texas at Austin

In *Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV*, feminist media activist Jennifer Pozner analyzes television s most controversial genres: reality shows. As a feminist journalist, media commentator, and founder and executive director of Women in Media & News, Pozner's approach to reality television diverges in definitive ways from traditional scholarly techniques.[1] Pozner's critical and insightful examination of the alarming effects of reality show trends makes *Reality Bites Back* an important resource for television researchers launching projects in the cross-section of reality, race, class, and gender, as well as a suitable read for all persons interested in understanding the meanings behind reality programs.

Pozner begins her book by dismissing simplistic notions that present reality television as "harmless fluff" or a guilty pleasure, and instead, stresses the importance of deconstructing the complex relationships between reality television show producers, networks, contestants, and viewers. She also dispels the myth that the proliferation of reality television is a response by networks to the public s demand for this type of entertainment, pointing out the more likely reason there is an abundance of reality shows: they are cheap to make and can generate millions in advertising revenue. The central premise of *Reality Bites Back* is that reality television renews old-fashioned gender stereotypes previously considered by feminist media researchers to be fading due to the gains made by feminist struggles,

[1] Women in Media & News Website, http://www.wimnonline.org/

and perpetuates those stereotypes with exploitative show concepts designed to garner ratings through the behavior of carefully chosen contestants. Using this as a starting point, Pozner argues that the definitions of "reality," and the images of women presented by these programs, are fundamentally damaging because of the power that mass media holds to deeply impact social and psychological understandings of how the audience view themselves and others. From there, Pozner interrogates representations of bodies, race, class, and sexuality to illustrate the profound social consequences of stereotyping on reality television.

In each chapter, Pozner explores a different trope of reality genre television, the implications of the tropes, and how they may effect individuals and society. She is thorough and precise in breaking down the underlying components of reality television, including an examination of the pervasive role of fairy tale romance themes in Chapter One and hyperconsumerism and mockery of the poor in Chapter Four. Additionally, in Chapter Seven, Pozner critiques the use of violence in glamorous and romantic contexts on reality television, providing specific examples in which women are instructed to be passive or to overlook offensive and dangerous behavior. In Chapter Nine, she discusses the integration of advertising, product placement, and the assumption of gendered consumerism on reality shows such as *America's Top Model.*

Of particular interest for feminist media scholars is the second chapter, Get Comfortable with My Flaw Finder. This chapter looks at television shows in which a woman s worth is equated to her body, normalizing bodily scrutiny and self-regulation. The third chapter also makes an important contribution to feminist media studies. In this chapter, "Bitches and Morons and Skanks, Oh My!" Pozner examines the very narrow roles in which women are placed in reality television.

Both in chapters 5 and 6, Pozner addresses the ways in which race is exploited to typecast people of color. She suggests that this generates detrimental social effects as both contradictory and essentializing messages about race and ethnicity become more widespread through the media. Erasing Ethnicity, Encoding Bigotry and Ghetto Bitches, China Dolls, and Cha Cha Divas investigate racism and post-racial displays in the controversial program *Flavor*

of Love and the intersection of post-racial attitudes with varying standards of ethnic beauty through a look at Tyra Banks and *America's Next Top Model*. Through analyses in all of these chapters, Pozner's book coincides with prior academic studies of reality television which conclude that reality programs are far from real in the truest sense, that their contestants are exploited on fundamental levels, and that most importantly, while viewers might understand these factors, it does not dissuade watching or prevent them from identifying with contestants in both negative and positive ways. Thus, the most important contribution of Pozner's first nine chapters is not necessarily the presentation of an original theoretical framework; rather it is the application of existing frameworks to her breadth of comprehensive reality television knowledge.

Throughout the book, Pozner makes clear that her goal is not to banish reality shows, but is rather to encourage critical media literacy, analytic practice and activism. This is where she turns in the last two chapters of the book. Chapter Ten: Fun with Media Literacy! includes step-by-step instructions on how to make your own Backlash Bingo game, suggestions for watching reality television with your family, Deconstruction Questions written by the Media Literacy Project, cut out postcards, and even a set of reality TV subgenre-specific drinking games among other fun and unique methods of fostering conscious viewing habits. In chapter Eleven: What Are You Going to Do? includes suggestions for six concrete ways to take action, as well as fifteen short essays written by media justice advocates offering advice based upon their own experiences.

Overall, Jennifer Pozner's Reality Bites Back is a fascinating read that never fails to engage the reader from Pozner's description of reality television stereotyping, her witty, funny, and sometimes outrageous commentary, or her reportings on the status that reality television has reached in American culture. Pozner's methodological and linguistic approach makes it an accessible text for academic and non-academic readers alike. For budding media scholars and anyone interested in learning about the inner-workings of the reality television industry from a sociological perspective, Pozner's work is a must-read. She carves out

her own ground by including social justice-oriented elements, and rather than leaving the reader frustrated after nine chapters of bad news, Pozner inspires readers to action by providing suggestions and stories of success that prove media activism is attainable at many levels.

For Phyllis

Chanel Clarke
Michener Center for Writers, The University of Texas at Austin

Into halo to erase the seventeen signatures.
Into mouth to dethrone King James.

Into ship s hull to smell the living.
Into sea to reckon with the tossed.

Into dust to touch dust.
Into carbon atom to seek Adam.

Into the coast to know myself.
Into sun s pouring to hold a little girl s hand.

Into *love too vehement.*
Into *the close contracted mind filled with fire.*

Contributors

Lisa L. Moore is Associate Professor of English and Women s and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* (Duke, 1997) and *Sister Arts: The Erotics of Lesbian Landscapes* (Minnesota, 2011). She is the co-editor of *Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia and the Austin Project* (Texas, 2010) and *Transatlantic Feminisms in the Age of Revolutions* (Oxford, 2012). Her poems have appeared in anthologies and journals including *Sinister Wisdom* and *Broadsided*.

Tosin Abiodun is a graduate student in the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin.

Reyna Anaya is a doctoral student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership program at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). She currently works as a graduate practitioner in Enrollment Management and Student Access at UNC. As a practitioner, Reyna works to provide retention and transition options for current and returning students through mentoring, programming, and withdrawal initiatives. She received her Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies at Colorado State University in 2007 and Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at UNC in 2009. Her research interests include: borderland theory and its influence on Chicana college student development, intersectionality theory, multiple identity development, and women in higher education. In addition to her student and practitioner identities, Reyna is the proud mom of her three-year old daughter, Aiyana.

Luana Bessa is a fifth year Counseling Psychology Doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include issues of gender, culture, and identity development and transition, and intersecting identities. She has worked with veterans in a clinical as well as research capacity, participating in Dr. Ainslie s research project on veterans for the past four years, as well as spending one year as a trainee in the Austin VA. She is currently working on her

dissertation, which investigates the multiple identities of Brazilian immigrant women as they navigate the acculturation experience. She plans to continue to serve disadvantaged communities after obtaining her degree. In her free time, she loves to read, watch movies, do yoga, and spend time with her friends and loved ones.

Katherine Charek Briggs is currently a graduate student in Women s and Gender Studies and the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin and holds a BA in English, German, and Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests include body studies, popular culture, and reproductive justice in the media.

Chanel Clarke is currently pursuing her MFA in poetry at the Michener Center for Writers in the University of Texas at Austin. Her poems have appeared in *Sou'wester*, *Octopus*, *Side B Magazine* and *GLR*. She was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana.

M. Catherine Coleman is a doctoral student in the Department of English at the University of Texas at Austin.

Annie Farmer is beginning her third year in the Counseling Psychology doctoral program at University of Texas at Austin. She studied anthropology as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania where she first developed an interest in gender studies. Before returning to graduate school she had the opportunity to work at two nonprofit organizations dedicated to changing women's lives that profoundly impacted her own life, the Tundra Women s Coalition of Bethel, Alaska, and the YWCA of greater Austin.

Virginia Hernandez received her MA in Women s and Gender Studies in May 2011. Her thesis was entitled I m sorry this hasn t been a fairy tale : Examining Romance Reality TV through The Bachelor. Virginia s concentrations include gender issues, feminism, and postfeminism in reality television, talk shows, and general media trends. Currently, she is working on art, animation, and film projects.

Antonia Mandry is a doctoral candidate in International Educational Development with a concentration in Peace Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include education in the Middle East, human rights, and citizenship. She received her Master's of Education in Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Psychology in 2001 from Loyola University of Chicago. She previously taught at Middle East Technical University from 2004 to 2007, where she developed an expertise in English as a Foreign Language instruction. She has also worked with local human rights organizations and UNHCR in Ankara in addition to consulting for UNESCO in Paris in 2009. She is a Senior Editor for *Current Issues in Comparative Education* and former Managing Editor of the *Society of International Education Journal.*

Lauran Whitworth is a second-year doctoral student in the department of Women s, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Emory University. Lauran graduated from The University of Georgia (BA, English and Art History) and The Ohio State University (MA, History of Art). Her early graduate research focused on the politics of representation and culminated in a number of projects, including writings on Rembrandt s *Susanna and the Elders*, John Singer Sargent s *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit*, and another on contemporary photography. While at Ohio State, Lauran also participated in a transnational coalition, The Gender & Emancipation Project. Lauran s intellectual pursuits continue to pertain to corporeality, particularly depictions of bodies and space in film and photography. Lauran envisions a dissertation project on filmic and photographic representations of queer desire and habitations of space therein. She is also increasingly interested in performance theory, biopolitics (i.e. vulnerability studies), and bodily protest. Lauran has intermittently taught high school English and Humanities; she remains committed to exploring innovative avenues of teaching and learning.

Fall 2012 Call for Papers:
Media(ting) Genders and Sexualities: Identity, Representation, and Politics in New and Old Media

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DUE: December 1, 2011

The journal encourages scholars in all fields to contribute scholarly essays, book reviews, and creative writing relating to this issue s theme, **Media(ting) Genders and Sexualities: Identity, Representation, and Politics in New and Old Media**. We expect that this theme will inspire submissions that put gender and sexuality in conversation with intersecting identities of race, economic class, disability, nationality, and indigeneity. Submissions might address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Media representations of gender, sexuality, and race
- The politics of property, authorship, and expression in local and transnational contexts
- Queering media technologies
- Genders and sexualities in social media and popular culture

The deadline for 200 300 word abstracts is November 16, 2011. We use a digital Open Journal System for submissions. To submit your abstract, please make an account on our website. You will be able to track your submission through your account. Questions should be sent to editors at intersection.journal@gmail.com

Completed papers and artwork are due by January 16, 2012. All submissions should include the author s name, institution and department, contact information, title of submission, and word count. Scholarly essays and creative writing should be less than 5000 words. For book reviews, please email intersections.journal@gmail.com for a list of possible titles. Book reviews should be between 750 1250 words and include publication information about books reviewed.